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A FELLOW OF TRINITY

BY

ALAN ST. AUBYN

AUTHOR OF 'TROLLOPE'S DILEMMA,' 'THE JUNIOR DEAN,' ETC.



A NEW EDITION

WITH A NOTE BY OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

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A NOTE

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE 'AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.'

The Dedication of 'A Fellow of Trinity' touches my feelings deeply,—for to be valued and cherished by the young men of your ancient University goes to the heart of one born, as I was, under the shadow of the walls of that newer College, now calling itself a University, which grew up with the struggling colony, one of whose earliest places of settlement was OUR Cambridge.

The descriptions of Old Cambridge in 'A Fellow of Trinity' have a peculiar interest to a native of our New-World Cambridge, which I am, as well as a graduate of Harvard University.

It pleases me very much to be told that my writings are not unknown on the shores of the Cam, a river not so broad as our Charles, on which I look from my Boston library window, and which runs very near to the College buildings in our Cambridge.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Boston, Nov. 26, 1890.

TO
DR. OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

(WITH HIS VERY KIND PERMISSION)

THIS STORY OF UNIVERSITY LIFE—THE CHEQUERED, MANY-
SIDED STUDENT LIFE THAT HE HAS ASSOCIATED
WITH SO MANY GRACEFUL MEMORIES—

Is Dedicated

AS A LITTLE MEMENTO OF THAT OLDER CAMBRIDGE
WHERE, BY SUCCEEDING GENERATIONS OF
UNDERGRADUATES, HE IS
REGARDED WITH EVER-INCREASING
ADMIRATION AND AFFECTION

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A FELLOW OF TRINITY.

CHAPTER I.

ERNESTI FLOWERS, PENSIONARIIL.

‘The many fail; the one succeeds.’

THE story of Ernest Flowers’ failures and successes is a very brief one. It has not even the charm of novelty. It is a story as old as the hills. The old foolish story of an early—ridiculously early—improvident marriage, of a short spasm of unutterable happiness, of limited means, and failing health; of failure, disappointment, and death.

Ernesti Flowers, pensionarii, as he was described in the books of Christ’s College, was an impressionable undergraduate, in his first year, when he committed the crowning indiscretion of his life and married his tutor’s daughter.

Not the daughter of his college tutor, the learned and eminent divine, senior tutor and Fellow of Christ’s, but a very humble ‘twig’ of that honourable profession, a poor seedy, broken-down old coach, who eked out a slender income by preparing pupils for the University.

He prepared Ernest, only son of that much-respected medical practitioner, the late Herbert Flowers, M.R.C.S., of Bideford in North Devon; and when his hopeful pupil ought to have been attending to his studies, that idle and improvident youth was falling deeper and deeper in love with his little daughter.

If any excuse could be found for such an unprecedented act of folly, Lucy herself was the excuse—quite a sufficient excuse.

The consequence of this folly was that Ernest Flowers went up to Cambridge wholly unprepared for the serious work that lay before him there.

He was plucked, to begin with, in the first part of the Little-Go, when he went up in the October term, so he discreetly put that aside and prepared for the second part, which he took in the December following, and in that also he failed.

He was persevering, if he were not a genius, and he went back to his old coach, and plodded on through the Christmas vacation, falling deeper and deeper in love every day—and he was quite deep enough already—with his coach's pretty daughter.

When he presented himself in June, for the second time, for examination in that unhappy Part I. of the Previous, there were quite sufficient reasons to account for his second failure. Lucy's father was dead.

The old coach had suddenly broken up; gone to pieces in a day, like the Deacon's wonderful masterpiece. Like it, there had been in the worn-out old coach's constitution through the long winter a general flavour of mild decay, and when spring came, and the flowers were pushing up through the warm earth, and the sunshine that he loved was streaming in through his narrow windows, the poor scholar took his last degree; and the old coach went suddenly to pieces, wheels and all.

There was so little left for poor Lucy to begin the world upon; and that little of so unavailable a character, from a female point of view—a seedy old scholar's wardrobe (a ragged, threadbare M.A. gown, which the deceased coach wore to the last, being the principal item), a bookshelf, full of musty old classics, some worn, shabby furniture, and a massive silver inkstand.

This last—Lucy's dowry—had been given to the old scholar years ago by the Fellows of his college, when he had married and given up his fellowship, and it bore an inscription in Latin, and the arms of Trinity College, Cambridge.

It was no wonder that the impressionable undergraduate failed in his examination, and was ignominiously sent down by the stoniest-hearted of tutors, when this tender creature was, by one cruel stroke of Fate, turned adrift upon the wide world.

Homeless and an orphan!

It made him quite shiver to think of it, as he went up to the Senate House, in the June sunshine, to that unlucky exam.

Not exactly a cold shiver.

He thought of it all the time the exam. was on, when he ought to have been thinking of something else. It got between him and his papers, and mixed itself up, in a most unaccountable manner, with the Odes of Horace, and the Latin and Greek Accidence—this bewildering idea, that the girl he loved was homeless and an orphan!

He quite made up his mind, during that memorable examination, and came away from it blushing and as happy a man as if he had scored the highest success of his year. No wonder his tutor sent him down!

It was no use for Lucy to say that she was going out as a governess.

She couldn't possibly take that library of musty old books with her, to say nothing of the shabby furniture, and the silver inkstand.

Ernest Flowers put the matter so strongly before her, and he was so very much in earnest, having settled everything quite satisfactorily during the examination, that Lucy's obstacles were all swept away, and—they were married.

What was it to that supremely blessed undergraduate, that at the end of his first year he had failed successively in all his University examinations, and had not even passed one part of the Little-Go: had he not won the 'consolation cup'—*Love*—which Fortune keeps for those who are beaten in the race?

He was outrageously happy, and not at all sorry that he was sent down for a term. It would prolong the honeymoon.

The honeymoon could hardly be said to be over when Ernest Flowers and his bride came up to Cambridge the following year, and settled in delightful lodgings just outside the college walls.

It had been the happiest time; but it had drawbacks which a youthful bridegroom seldom allows himself to consider—it had cost a great deal of money.

All things are relative, and what would have been economy to most men was rank extravagance to Ernest Flowers, with his slender patrimony. With added responsibilities, present and in the future, it behoved him to return to his work with renewed diligence, and to prepare seriously for the Church.

He applied himself so well to his studies with this delightful stimulus, that in the examination in the following December he passed successfully the two parts of the long delayed Little-Go.

It was the proudest and happiest day of the poor student's life when his Little-Wine Go came off late in December.

It was the darkest and dreariest day of the whole year, and the shortest. But it was the longest, and brightest, and most delightful day that ever dawned on this unsympathetic globe to Ernest Flowers, for an unbidden guest had dropped in to join his Little-Wine-Go, and lay sleeping on Lucy's bosom.

It was a wonderful baby! apart from its pinkness, and roundness, and general suggestiveness of crumpled rose-leaves, which belong to babies in general. A grave, thoughtful baby, much given to solemn retrospection or anticipation—which?—as it lay, self-absorbed, with that magnificent indifference to outside things which is only possible to babies.

Foolish little Lucy, looking down with fond eyes upon the round pink face, so preternaturally grave, expressed her strong maternal conviction that in coming into the world this mite of a philosopher had forgotten something and was always trying to remember it. Perhaps it had?

The duty to provide for this addition to his household pressed so heavily on Ernest Flowers that he applied himself with so much vigour to his studies that before the term was over his health was completely broken down. He could do but little reading the next term, and the consequence was he was plucked in his 'General,'

and for the second time in his chequered University career was 'sent down.'

Things were looking serious. That slender patrimony that Ernest Flowers depended upon, like the widow's cruse, to last out until he was safely landed in the bosom of the Church, was diminishing rapidly.

The cruse, indeed, was nearly spent, and he was no nearer the Church than ever.

Disheartened and out of health, the poor scholar took his precious belongings and went back to his native place in the sweet West Country. The air of his native hills, the wholesome breath of the salt sea, the quiet, the rest, and the delicious repose of those blissful months, restored his wasted strength, and he began afresh to read for the dreaded examination.

New subjects had to be read and new ground broken, but the dear beacon at his hearth cheered him through all this uncongenial toil.

What is a pleasure to most men was a heavy burden to the humble student, plodding wearily on alone and unaided.

He went up at Christmas to be examined once more for the 'General,' and—failed in one paper.

It was enough to dishearten the strongest. But he had still the 'consolation cup,' that Fortune had presented to him after his first defeat, awaiting him. He had been cruelly bruised and beaten in the ring; he had lost the race, and had won neither laurels nor praise. He crept humbly back to his poor home, disheartened and travel-worn, and bearing all the traces of defeat on his shamed face. And, lo, his cup was brimming over!

What is denied to most men was his without stint—full measure, pressed down, and running over.

Surely there was no failure here. Does not Fortune, wise and wonderful, for everything she withholds ever yield a richer blessing?

What is compensation, if not gain for every loss, and, alas, loss for every gain?

What was more to the point with the unsuccessful undergraduate, who had other and dearer burdens to bear besides his own, was the terribly significant fact that the cruse had nearly all run out.

It had been a very humble cruse, to begin with, and it had been poured out with a lavish hand in those early, thoughtless, honeymoon days, and now it would only run drop by drop.

Something must be done. So the dear little cottage by the Severn Sea was given up, and Ernest Flowers took a lay-readership in a nasty smoky town in the Black Country, and conducted services for an uncouth, unwashed population in a mission chapel.

The soot got down into his lungs, and the smoke choked him; but he plodded on bravely, with Lucy and her boy by his side, and

worked hard and read hard, employing all his spare time in reading for his degree.

At the end of another twelvemonths he told himself he was ready, and he went up to Cambridge once more to be examined; this time in the highest spirits and confident of success.

How can the rest be told, were it not that such things are happening every day? It had best be told briefly.

Ernest Flowers started for Cambridge, leaving his dear ones among the smoke and soot, travelling third-class, by slow trains, involving long waits in draughty stations in bitter winter weather.

He caught a chill on the journey, and the day that the examination came off he was confined to his bed with pleurisy.

Lucy was sent for; but meanwhile the hard, unsympathetic college tutor, who had so repeatedly sent him down, came over to his poor rooms and nursed him like a friend.

Like a friend? Like a woman, rather, if tenderness and thoughtful care and self-devotion alone are womanly.

He nursed him unremittingly, this kind friend, and when Lucy came, shared her vigils; but neither his care nor her love availed to hold the worn-out scholar back when the summons came, and it came suddenly, to a higher examination, which many more gifted may be unable to pass as well.

It was the morning of the day when the degrees were conferred, and when the college tutor came back from the Senate House, after the congregation was over, where, as Prælector, he had presented to the Vice-Chancellor the men who had passed through their University course with honour, to receive the well-merited award, the humble student he had left in the upper chamber had already taken his degree before that Greater Senate where earthly judgments are reversed.

They buried the humble student who had won neither fame nor laurels, whose name would never be inscribed in golden letters on any *Honoris Causâ*, in the green churchyard of Grantchester, where so much learned dust reposes.

His fellow-undergraduates raised, amid the lichen-encrusted memorials of the wise and the great, a small white stone recording the blameless life and the earnest piety of the unsuccessful scholar.

The lichens crept over it by-and-by, and the letters were all filled up, and the dust beneath mingled with the learned dust of eminent scholars, and the little upright stone fell aslant and sank into the soft clayey soil, and the ivy covered it up, and his simple memory, his failures and his successes, were very soon quite forgotten.

Lucy went away with her boy; she had nowhere to go but to her own little native town in the West-Country. So back she came to Bideford in the raw January weather, leaving the poor scholar, whose entire devotion had filled the cup of her innocent

happiness to the brim, to be rained upon and snowed upon in the green churchyard of Grantchester.

His devotion to his helpless child and wife had outlived the slender thread of life. The dead hand that was powerless to guide was still raised to bless.

Not an empty blessing !

In his health and prosperity Ernest Flowers had, with tender forethought, insured his life, and Lucy and her boy were thus placed above the reach of actual want.

It was but a slender provision ; but in the relative order of things, it was quite a bountiful one to Lucy, with her humble needs and her innocent, thankful heart.

The old *lures et penates* of her youth were still about her—the shabby old furniture of her childhood, the musty library of the deceased coach, and the silver ink-stand. They had been given house-room by a neighbouring rector in a great unused coach-house, and they were mustier than ever, and covered with a fine coat of blue mould when Lucy saw them again. Nevertheless, the sight of their dear besotted old faces brought a blessed rush of tears to her eyes, and their familiar presence filled the poor cottage with sweet, tender memories.

It was a ridiculous mite of a cottage, standing back from the highroad in a little homely garden, amid green meadows and flowering hawthorn hedges, with the wooded hills rising steeply behind it. It was delightfully white and low-browed, and crowned with thatch, which was golden in the sun with lichens and stone-works. And from its tiny casements, which were overhung with creeping plants, there was a glorious view of the deep-blue Severn Sea.

Among such surroundings Herbert Flowers grew from infancy to childhood, and from childhood to youth. The breath of the salt sea, the brave south-westers that come tearing up from the Atlantic, had made him hardy of limb, and the watchful love and care—and prayers—of that tender Mentor of his youth had made him brave, and manly, and gentle, and chivalrous.

The sun had browned his cheeks, and tanned and freckled his fair open forehead ; but another influence, not less potent, had warmed his inner nature and made him sensitive and impressionable, and generous to the faults of others.

Lucy's boy had not grown up without education. The simple lessons lisped at his mother's knee expanded by-and-by into the less delightful tasks of his native grammar school.

Herbert Flowers was not at all a remarkable scholar. The Greek language presented exceptional difficulties to him and he couldn't see his way in Latin verses.

He was persevering and industrious, but by no means a genius.

Lucy remembered his father, and sighed ; but she never lost faith in him.

One day, when she was bewailing his deficiencies, she resolved that, in order to help her boy, she would learn Greek herself. And why not?

She was a scholar's daughter, and the library of the old coach, which had been growing mustier and mustier every year, was on the shabby bookshelves.

She had mastered the alphabet in her childhood, and toiled half-way through the Greek Grammar.

What a task it had been then! What a labour of love it was now, with Herbert in happy rivalry, plodding—already less wearily—on by her side.

There was a delightful curate, who used to come in of evenings to coach the widow and her son; and the patience and long-suffering of that single-minded young man were something wonderful.

He was very fond of the verb *φιλεῖν*, and was never tired of hearing Lucy repeat it, looking modestly, with ingenuous blushes, into her sweet eyes the while—they were still sweet, and worth looking into. But the ungrateful widow preferred looking into her boy's sun-browned face, and finishing the delightful verb up with a maternal embrace.

The curate would sigh, and walk sadly home to his humble lodging, repeating the lesson softly to himself under the stars, with the addition of a very pretty rendering in Greek of the noun 'Lucy.'

Other lovers had declined the same noun, in conjunction with the same delightful verb, during Lucy's long, uneventful widowhood, but the faithful little woman was Lucy Flowers still. She had never forgotten that white stone—it was all aslant now—in Grantchester Churchyard.

Herbert got on better with his Greek after a few months of this friendly rivalry; he got on so well, indeed, that he earned a remove to a higher form, and a prize, too, at the next school speech-day.

What a proud and happy day it was to Lucy when little Herbert, in public school parlance, 'broke his duck's egg'—otherwise took his first prize. It was a very small prize to be proud of at all! Heaps of boys took away whole armfuls of books—big handsome volumes, worth winning—and carried off scholarships and exhibitions, while their parents sat by placid and unmoved; and there was that foolish little Lucy with the glad tears brimming in her eyes, blurring all the stolid faces that swam before her, and creating quite a nimbus around the kind face of the noble old Earl who distributed the prizes, because her boy had won a shabby little meagre volume—the classical prize in the lowest form of the lower school! Some people—women mostly—are thankful for very small things.

But Lucy did a dreadful thing on that occasion. Her manners, unfortunately, had not the repose that marks the caste of Vere of Vere, or even of the county families of North Devon.

The glad, foolish, proud mother, with the tears brimming in her

eyes, and her full heart overflowing with joy, waved a white handkerchief from her back seat as Herbert, blushing modestly all the way, came down the hall, amid the cheering of his schoolfellows.

'You shouldn't have done that, mamma,' he said, in a tone of remonstrance, when he came home, and she was covering his face with kisses; 'it made the other fellows laugh.'

She never waved a white handkerchief again, though she sat year after year in that crowded hall, and saw him carry away prize after prize—armfuls of them later on, and by-and-by a scholarship.

He ever remembered with a pang of contrition, when the day came that the kind hand could wave no more pocket-handkerchiefs, that boyish remonstrance. He has distributed prizes himself since then; and the remembrance of that day and that scene ever rises before him on these occasions; and he is surprised to see how shining the faces of the boys are, as they swim before him in a quite unaccountable mist, when some foolish mother in the crowd waves a white handkerchief because her boy takes an insignificant little prize.

But this is a divergence.

Lucy had other things to do beside waving pocket-handkerchiefs however proud and happy the occasion.

Her slender little income no longer sufficed for her growing expenses. She had her ambitions, like more wealthy mothers, and she liked to see her boy hold his own with the rest. But the slender thread of that narrow income was not elastic; and year after year it failed, when drawn out to the most attenuated thread, to encompass her growing expenses.

A happy inspiration came to the little widow, when this terribly urgent question of ways and means was consuming her with anxiety.

Was she not a scholar's daughter, and a scholar's wife, and already herself a very fair Greek and Latin scholar? She would take pupils, and teach other boys, as she had taught her own, the simple rudiments of what they would have to learn more fully hereafter, at a public school.

She had not far to seek for pupils. There was quite a nursery full of young hopefuls, waiting to be instructed in living languages, as well as dead, up at the great house across the river.

The great house, otherwise known to all the country round as Bratton Court, was the residence of Sir Hugh Spurway, who, beside being blessed with a lovely wife—the daughter of an earl—was blessed more superlatively with seven lovely children.

Master Tom Spurway, the eldest, was at Eton; Miss Muriel Spurway, the fair daughter of the house, was in her teens; and the five younger scions of the noble house were in the schoolroom or nursery, or both.

The education of the younger Spurways was superintended by a

young Breton girl, whose mother had been Lady Millicent's nurse. Her Ladyship, who was nothing if not philanthropic, had adopted the girl, and educated her nicely, with a becoming sense of her dependence; and in return she was imparting as much of that education as she could remember to the unruly members of the Bratton nursery.

Her benefactress was not satisfied with the result; and when Lucy Flowers signified her desire to take pupils, she was engaged at once to superintend the education of the junior members of this noble family.

The post was no sinecure. The children were high-spirited and self-willed, not to say rebellious and defiant; and the work of the timid little institutrice was quite cut out.

But Lucy stuck to her task bravely, and she had her reward. The golden guineas and the dear, crisp, fluttering bank-notes that came in with delightful punctuality at the end of every quarter—there were four in the year then, not three unequal divisions of time, as now—were a sufficient balm for every wound.

This little income, so hardly earned, was a perfect *El Dorado* to Lucy and her boy. And the arrangement was not without its advantages to Herbert Flowers. He used to walk up to the great house on half holidays and saints' days—they had a good many at St. Anne's Grammar School; the calendar hadn't been revised lately—and help his mother by taking the older boys in Greek. He had outrun the dear patient little mother in the race, and mouthed his Homer with the best.

They were delightful afternoons, and red-letter days indeed to the humble-minded schoolboy.

What to him, in those happy unconventional days, that he had to go round the back way—and a very long way round it was—and enter the great house by the back stairs?

The birds sang quite as delightfully, and the azaleas and rhododendrons bloomed as luxuriantly, and the perfume of the great heavy-headed roses was quite as sweet, as in my lady's rose-garden, which you passed as you came up by the avenue to the great stately front-door.

Herbert had never been round that way, but he used to push the rhododendrons aside, and get glimpses of the charmed world that lay so far beyond him, and see the quality disporting themselves on the lawn, and the peacock, that had as many eyes as there are days in the year in his tail, strutting proudly in the sun.

The sight of that ridiculous bird, who always flaunted his great ostentatious tail at him, hurt him like a personal insult. He didn't object to the back stairs, and he didn't at all mind that long way round beneath the trees, where the birds were singing, that led to the back entrance, but he hated the peacock.

Julie, the Breton governess, was very glad of the willing assist-

ance of the clever sixth-form boy in that uproarious schoolroom. Herbert inherited, on his mother's side, the old coach's happy tact of ruling other minds, and the youthful disciplinarian would restore order when his worn-out parent and her timid little coadjutor, Julie, were powerless in the midst of open rebellion and anarchy.

He came up pretty often to the great house, but never too often for Julie. He was quite at home at the schoolroom tea, presided over by the pretty timid little *gouvernante*, and ate the thick bread and butter, and spread the schoolroom marmalade, with infinite relish.

He stayed behind pretty often, and let his weary parent walk home—by the back way—alone, while he played with the children in the meadow behind the house, out of the sight of the pleasant lawn where the quality disported themselves.

He showed the boys how to put the weight, and how to make a fine kick-off in football; he initiated them into all the dark mysteries of that delightful game where bone and muscle are of no avail against skill and speed.

He showed them how to gather themselves up for the high jump, and how to spread themselves out for the long jump; how to draw upon their wind for the short race, and how to husband it for the long.

In all these diversions, Julie was not very much good, but she stood by with the two girls and formed the audience, and led the applause. She always wore a very becoming hat on this occasion, formerly my lady's, and a gauzy scarf, late my lady's also, wound daintily around her expressive shoulders, and a fresh rosebud in her bosom, and bows on her high-heeled French shoes.

It was very nice of the little Breton governess to take so much trouble for the benefit of a poor sixth-form boy at a public school, when, on other occasions, when the children played alone, she wore untidy little slippers down at heel, and a handkerchief tied beneath her chin, and a faded old shawl about her shoulders, and never took any interest whatever in their games.

She knew quite well when to expect him, for she had a little Catholic calendar—my lady's new year's gift—with all the half-holidays and saints' days carefully marked, so that she was never caught unawares, down at heel and in curl-papers.

She was a slattern at heart, like most Frenchwomen, that pretty *petite* Julie with her shifty toilette and ravishing coiffures. Poor little soul! she had only my lady's and Miss Muriel's left-off finery by way of salary, and she was quite alone in the world.

She was very fond of admiration—she did not stand quite alone in that respect—and she would have liked a little love; she didn't get either at Bratton Court, so she was fain to fall back upon a schoolboy *pour passer le temps*.

In the holidays when Tom Spurway was home from Eton, he would condescend in a superior way to join in the children's games,

Unfortunately for his dignity, Herbert Flowers invariably beat him in every trial of strength, or speed, or skill, and the amiable children would hail their elder brother's failures with truly fraternal shouts of derision. When he had had quite enough of it, and had been sufficiently bruised and beaten, or broken his shins over the hurdles, or dislocated his wrist at football, or sprained his ankle in jumping, he would retire sulkily to the house, and 'confound the beggar's impudence' by the way; but he never invited the 'beggar' to enter with him and partake of my lady's hospitality.

When the family happened to be staying at the Court, *i.e.*, her ladyship, Sir Hugh, and Miss Muriel, her ladyship's eldest daughter would sometimes condescend also to join in the children's games.

She was more popular with her younger brothers than the Etonian, and didn't give herself airs. Perhaps it would have been quite as well if she had, and saved the foolish schoolboy many a heartache.

Muriel Spurway was the Diana of the West-Country; she had ridden to hounds ever since she could sit in the saddle. A bright, fearless girl with plenty of pluck, and, as her admirers used to express it, with fitting elegance of speech, 'not a ha'porth of sentiment.'

Perhaps that was her especial charm, as it divested her of all restraint and self-consciousness, and she flung herself into every out-door sport as if she had been a boy among boys. During the hunting season she lived in the saddle, and when the spring came, red in hand, she would land the silver shining salmon with any angler on the Torridge, or follow the bead on the river in pursuit of the elusive otter.

Failing other engagements, Miss Muriel would betake herself to milder forms of recreation—cricket, football, quoits, skittles—or whatever happened to come uppermost, and finding a congenial spirit in Herbert Flowers, she would desert the tennis-court, where her ladyship's guests disported themselves, and play cricket for hours in the field behind the stables with the sixth form schoolboy who had come up—by the back way—to help the children with their Greek.

He taught her many things beside bowling in those delightful half-holidays. She was not at all above skittles, or quoits, or rounders, and could put the weight or throw the cricket-ball with Herbert himself.

It was a dangerously delightful time to the impressionable school-boy, but it was not without its benefit—its quite incalculable benefit.

Latin verses, which had hitherto been Herbert's bugbear, and had never given him a chance in his form, suddenly became his delight and his incessant occupation. He saw his way now as he had never seen it before; the disordered syllables fell all at once

into their places, and hexameters and pentameters grew beneath his eager pen.

What happy inspiration was this—this sudden sweet facility, this magic music that found spontaneous rhythmic utterance?

Herbert Flowers' Latin verses were all at once the wonder of the sixth form, and of the whole school indeed; but there was a woman's name that, under one disguise or another, was never absent from these dainty elegiacs—Muriel, Murietta, Muriella.

The foolish boy secretly nursed his passion, and created saints' days quite foreign to the calendar, on his own account, in order to steal up—by the back way—to the great house, and bowl through the hot June sunshine to Muriel Spurway; and when she grew tired, and joined the quality on the tennis-lawn, dismissing her humble admirer with an indifferent nod, and a 'No more cricket to-day, thank you, Flowers,' he would steal away among the shrubs, and, parting the rhododendrons, watch her disporting herself among the squirearchy of the county, and he would grind his heel into the gravel and turn savagely away.

The peacock, who was sunning himself on the sloping bank adjoining the shrubbery, caught him one day in the act, and screeched at him in his arrogant, ridiculous way. Herbert was sore at heart, and his cup of humiliation was quite full already; and he picked up the first stone that came to his hand and flung it at the creature, who rolled over and limped crestfallen away, dragging his foolish tail in the dust. Herbert was dreadfully ashamed of himself, but he hated the wretched bird more than ever.

CHAPTER II.

IN STATU PUPILLARI.

'When all the world was young, lad'

THERE were more stirring events awaiting the shamefaced school-boy, who had only now begun to realize dimly what it was to be poor and proud, than peeping through rhododendrons, and throwing stones at peacocks.

The school examinations were coming on, and he was entered, with three others, in the competition for the Sidney Sussex Scholarship that fell vacant this year. Great issues hung upon the result of the examination. If he won the school scholarship he would go to college, and by-and-by become a member of some learned profession. If he failed, that dream would be all over, and he must sit on a high stool in an office, or sweep a shop, or dispense physic and make up pills, which last alternative was as agreeable to Herbert Flowers' mind as taking them.

When Lucy timidly expostulated with him on that memorable night when he had lamed the peacock, and meekly suggested that

he should go up to the great house no more until the examination was over, he answered readily enough, in the bitterness of his spirit, 'All right, mother ; I'll not go up to Bratton Court again until I go up to the front door.'

And he did not go up again for many days ; and Julie arranged her coiffures, and wore out her French shoes, in vain.

There were not many days to prepare for the great event.

'I haven't a ghost of a chance, Jones,' he said, on the eve of the fateful day, to the fellow who would run him closest ; 'if it weren't for the mater's sake I wouldn't go in ; but you've nothing to fear from me. I'm out of the running already. I wish you luck, Jones, with all my heart !'

And he meant it.

He did his best, which is all a schoolboy—or a man—can do, and waited with Spartan resignation for the result.

He had relieved his mind of an enormous weight of Latin and Greek verbs, and had leisure to contemplate the pestle and mortar business, which he told himself was now inevitable.

He had so far assured himself of the certainty of his foregone conclusions, that he had begged his mother not to expose herself to certain mortification by being present when the result was announced ; and he sheltered himself at the very back of the great schoolroom, behind all the lower-form boys, on Speech Day, that the little narrow-world of Bideford should not mock at his discomfiture.

Her ladyship was there, among the county people in the front seats, and Sir Hugh, who was a trustee of the school, distributed the prizes.

He saw the Diana of his hexameters in a diaphanous cloud, with a red, red rose in her bosom, between the legs of the lower-form boys. But he heard nothing ; he was too busy trying to get a glimpse at the face above that red rose, and the boys were all stamping with their feet, so that he only got a piecemeal view by snatches—a rose between one pair of legs and a ringlet behind another.

Why couldn't the fellows sit still ? and what a deuce of a noise they were making ! and what were they shouting his name for ? Sir Hugh was on his legs, and was making a speech, or trying to, and the cheering was deafening.

Again his name was on every lip ; tush ! it was only a singing in his ears, and he applied himself again to get a kaleidoscope view of the rose and its wearer.

'Flowers ! Flowers !' It was his name—there could be no mistaking it now—and he came forward, white and grave, and with all the faces in the room piled one above the other, and heaped together like faces in a crowded theatre.

He saw none of them distinctly, only a red rose on a white bosom, seen through a mist ; and presently Sir Hugh was grasping his

hand in his hearty grip, and congratulating him on his success—his success? his?—and expressing a very kind hope that he would do credit to his old school, and head that blank *honoris causa*, that had just been set up on the bare walls of the big schoolroom, with a great University success.

He heard it all in a dream; and saw the familiar faces in the hall swimming before him with a sense that it was all very far off, and quite unreal.

But as he came down the hall Muriel Spurway held out a little gloved hand, and warmly congratulated him on his success, and Lady Millicent surveyed him through her gold eyeglass as if he were some curious animal.

'Dear me,' said her ladyship, with that delightful urbanity that characterized her intercourse with her inferiors, 'so this is Herbert Flowers!'

She gave him—Lady Millicent was the most condescending of women, and she could afford to be, which is more than every woman in her position can—she gave him exactly two fingers, and Muriel smilingly gave him a rose.

He never knew how he got back to his seat. He didn't at all believe it was real when the ceremony of the prize-giving was resumed. He saw all the other fellows going up for their smaller prizes, and he felt somehow that he was out of the running. There was a great gulf between them now. He was a schoolboy no longer.

He had got the prize he most coveted—a red rose.

He never looked over to the back seats, where the dear friend who rejoiced, as no other friend on earth ever would rejoice, at his success, sat white and tearful, with a trembling paean welling up in her heart too deep for words.

Only when Jones faltered his honest congratulations in the school grounds, when it was all over, he fairly broke down.

'Oh Jones,' he said, 'I'm so sorry! I don't deserve it half so much as you do. Please God, you shall have it yet, Jones! And he wrung the astonished fellow's hand, and went off worshipping his rose.

Herbert Flowers was as good as his word, and Jones took the school scholarship at Sidney Sussex College, he himself having, meanwhile, won a sizarship at Trinity.

He said nothing about it to the little mother at Bideford until the matter was settled. He went in for the stiffest scholarship examination in Cambridge without help or advice from anyone, and scored his first University success.

When he took possession of the bare rooms allotted to him at the top of the staircase, commanding a fine view of the roof of the chapel, and prepared for his first night in college, he took carefully out from between the folds of silver paper where it reposed by day a very faded, scentless, dilapidated flower, on a nasty prickly

stalk, that had once been a red rose. He kissed the poor thing—he didn't mind the thorns—and put it reverently under his pillow. He had worn it over his heart all the day when he had been working away at the examination, and it had brought him luck.

Surely it had brought him luck !

There were carven roses of a larger growth and more enduring substance, scattered with a lavish hand over the venerable walls and gateways of every college in the 'Varsity : great Tudor roses ; crowned roses of Lancaster and York ; *rutilantes roseæ*, with flaming suns behind them, lighting up the way to success, distinction, fame—a royal rose-crowned way.

There were roses enough here, on walls, and gateways, and screens, and ceilings, and carven stalls, and painted panes, to have brought good fortune to any number of susceptible undergraduates.

But what to those who failed ? Well, there was a portcullis always ready, evenly balancing the rose—success and failure ever going hand in hand.

Was it the rose under his pillow that filled his waking thoughts and his foolish dreams, that first night in college, with visions of Muriel Spurway encouraging him at the back-door, disdaining him at the front, and filling him with unutterable hopes and ambitions ?

The little mother hadn't given him a rose at parting. She could hardly have got one into the little silk-netted purse she gave him with her blessing. The station-master at Bideford wouldn't have exchanged it for a railway ticket if she had. But she gave him the best of her small store, packed in two shabby boxes, and addressed carefully in her own neat hand.

His conscience pricked him the following morning, when he unpacked them, and remembered the kind friend who was praying for him, he knew, at that very moment ; and whose gentle forethought had filled those bare rooms with so many touching mementoes of home. There was nothing lacking that Lucy's slender resources could supply. The musty old classics, that he had already begun to value as old friends, looked down with familiar faces at him, from the scantily-filled book-shelves on the wall, and on his table was the old coach's silver inkstand.

He vowed in his heart that he would be worthy of this love ; that his life here—his honourable and manly life, God helping him—should not whiten a single hair of that dear head.

What a proud and happy day it was, that memorable, never-to-be-forgotten day when he assumed the *toga virilis* , and wore the empurpled gown of Trinity—a second-hand one ! Does any man, to the end of the longest life, ever forget that proud and happy first day ? There have been later successes—other first days, memorable in their way. The first day in the pulpit, the first on the Bench, the first speech in the House, the first command in the

field—but the *coulour de rose* had paled by that time. There is no colouring so bright as the long-faded colours of those early days! Who does not look back upon them, realizing only when they are long past how happy they were!

One is very much wiser now, and richer, and, maybe, has reached the highest round of the ladder; but who does not remember the daisies that grew round the foot when one was climbing that lowest rung? Ah, but the old days were the best!

Herbert attended chapel twice that first day, and took the lowest seat among the ingenuous freshmen, and being a saint's day, he wore his bran-new surplice with becoming modesty. At Hall, as the youngest of the newly-elected scholars, he read the long Latin grace. His voice may have trembled as he stood up at the end of the scholar's table, with all the other men looking on, and the dons at the high tables looking down, lying in wait, as it were, for false quantities; but he had got from the *Benedic Domine* to the last echoing syllable of the long Trinity grace without a quantity misplaced. It never trembled after that, and the men never listened again, with supercilious tolerance, for false quantities at the lips of Herbert Flowers.

The few gold coins in that slender silk purse went a very little way in the quite unavoidable expenses of commencing residence. There was the furniture of the rooms to be taken off, at a valuation, to begin with—such furniture as it was! The former owner, being somewhat of a humorist, had left an inventory behind him for the assistance of the college valuer. It ran somewhat thus:

'Couch, minus three legs and the back; uneasy arm-chair, minus the arms (caution—*beware of the back legs*); portraits of Bendigo Bill, Tom Sayers, the Pimlico Pet (heads missing); looking-glass, with a hole in the middle where "Alice went through"; book-shelves, as good as new; handle of a shovel (Gothic design), and a tong; an æsthetic teapot without a spout (design registered), and a coffee-pot to match, minus the handle; sundry ware, all warranted to leak. Thrown in—the *bedmaker's ghost*.'

There were other more long-suffering articles of furniture which had escaped the playful treatment of the former owner and his friends, which, with a little repair, sufficed for Herbert's humble requirements, but he objected altogether to the last item in the list.

'Very sorry, sir,' said the college gyp, 'but it belongs to the rooms. Every gentleman has to have it, whether he will or no. It is never troublesome except when the men are going down, and, then gentlemen do say, it does make a bit of a stir; but its perfectly harmless, sir. Jest throw a coal-scuttle, or a tong, or anything that comes to hand, at the door, and her'll be quiet in a minute.'

It was a rather uncanny story connected with the ghost, though Herbert loftily declared he didn't believe a word of it.

And he didn't—in the daytime. But when night came, and his

oak was sported, and the college was wrapped in slumber, and the wind shrieked across the deserted quads, and whistled in an unpleasant way it had down his chimney, and tapped at his windows that looked out upon the leads, he was not quite so sceptical. He could not help thinking at these times of the old bedmaker who had hidden herself away in her den while the man who kept in the rooms had innocently locked his oak and put the key in his pocket and gone down, and when he came up, at the end of the long vacation, and unlocked the door, discovered the skeleton of his bedmaker stretched across the threshold.

It was uncanny, to say the least of it. Herbert used to think he heard the poor old creature tapping at the window-panes in the night, or beating upon the door of that inner den, which he was always very careful to shut before he went to bed; but it was only the college cats disporting themselves upon the roof.

He awoke with a start one night, and beheld, with a shiver running down his back, two fiery eyes staring in at his window; but it was only one of the playful creatures returning from a midnight prow. He got used to it after a few nights, and the usual musical accompaniments of their diversions, that were a distraction to other men, were a reassuring balm to his excited imagination.

His rooms were not bad ones, when he had learnt to accommodate himself to the peculiar exigences of their structure. They were large and airy, very airy, especially on windy nights; but at one end the roof was pitched so low that even the bedmaker's ghost couldn't have stood upright, and there were nasty beams across that were always lying in wait, as it were, for any sudden or thoughtless mode of advance. Herbert got used to it, but it tried his friends sorely, who generally carried away on their foreheads visible tokens of their visit.

There were three doors in the keeping-room, and a draught, or rather three draughts, each door had its own particular draught, to say nothing of the windows, of which there was quite a broadside, ill-fitting, and given to rattle upon the smallest provocation.

Still the situation had its advantages. It ensured quiet to some extent, and was far removed from the giddy distractions that beset more highly-favoured undergraduates in the rooms below.

Herbert had come up to work. He had no need to remind himself of that immutable decision, like other men of Trinity who made solemn resolutions every night and broke them with unvarying regularity every morning. Was it not graven with a pen of iron, nay, rather with red-hot finger of love, upon the tables of his heart, beneath the scentless petals of that red rose?

He had already passed the Little-Go with distinction before he began residence, and was free to work without let or hindrance for his degree. He was an honours-man from the beginning, and the fire of honest emulation was already smouldering in his breast.

A goodly number of freshmen came up that term to Trinity, and among them came an old acquaintance of Herbert's, Tom Spurway, from Eton.

He sat next to him in chapel a few days after his arrival, and he had the gratification of hearing that superior undergraduate, who sat at the table with the fellow-commoners, remark quite audibly as they crossed the quad :

'Confound the beggar's impudence !'

He had occasion to confound the beggar's impudence pretty frequently during the term, as they met very often at lectures, where the poor sizar's homely-cut garments and coarse shoes were a source of much delicate pleasantry on the part of the faultlessly attired Etonian. •Perhaps this was a justifiable set-off to the invidious comparisons—which were in questionable taste, to say the least of it—that his tutor was wont to draw between the work of the two students.

But if the Etonian was slow to acknowledge the merits of the modest scholar from a country grammar school, there were plenty of men in Trinity who were glad to make his acquaintance, in spite of his high-lows and the homely cut of his clothes.

All the men on his staircase called upon him during the first week, and showered their hospitality upon him. Cambridge is nothing if not hospitable. Not that this hospitality did Herbert very much good. At the end of his first week's residence he had already found out that it interfered sadly with his work.

Breakfasts that were continued till lunch-time didn't accommodate themselves very well to lectures, and post-prandial entertainments that were lengthened into the small hours of the night were not, certainly, conducive to that estimable habit, early rising.

It was the question of burning the candle at both ends, and the men of his staircase burnt it, with one consent, at the wrong end.

There was only one other man on the staircase—and he was training, and did half an hour's running before breakfast at Fenner's (the grounds of the Cambridge University Athletic Club)—that was up in time for early chapel.

Herbert found he could very well, by economizing the matutinal candle, manage half an hour's running at Fenner's, as well as chapel, before breakfast. This morning exercise brought him and the man in training a good deal together.

Geraint kept beneath him, and had the best rooms on the staircase. It was reported that he was rich, and consequently he hadn't come up to work, only to enjoy himself ; and as long as he followed this commendable pursuit not too obtrusively, the college authorities did not interfere with him.

He was a splendid fellow, with a magnificent physique, perfectly developed by judicious training ; tall, and broad, and sound as a bell, with a fair, frank face, and crisp, short chestnut curls, and

honest blue eyes, that looked straight out at you—as bold as a lion's and as tender as a girl's.

It was no wonder that Herbert was attracted to him. His easy good-nature and prodigal hospitality had won him the friendship of half the men in Trinity, to say nothing of the men in every other college in the 'Varsity. He was the willing prey of every sponger, the dupe of every blackleg and tiger in the University; he was worshipped by his gyp, and adored by his bedmaker; a mine of wealth to the Cambridge tradesmen, a source of regular income to the proctors, and a thorn—a generous, pleasant, good-natured thorn—in the side of the conscientious Dean of Trinity.

There was always a difference between Geraint and the Dean—a difference that took the form of brief epistolary correspondence—a correspondence that would have blighted in the bud any future hope of college testimonials; but Geraint was not likely to require any testimonials of character at the hand of the long-suffering, discreetly hoodwinked authorities of Trinity.

But there had never been any open rupture between him and the Dean. When they ran against one another in the quad, and Geraint met the unspoken rebuke in his kind eyes with his frank, delightful smile, the Dean's grave face would relax, and he would return his greeting as affectionately as if he had never missed a chapel in his life.

Herbert always parted with Geraint at the chapel door, and would go in alone, with that scanty contingent that came flying across the quads in the gray autumn mornings, just as the bell stopped—ceric forms seen through the mist, wildly struggling into gowns, and arriving panting and breathless at the scene of their morning devotions.

He never forgot those first early chapels. The strangeness of the scene, the strange faces around him, the gloom and grandeur of the place, heightened by an overpowering rush of old associations, held him spell-bound, till the organ spoke, and the fresh young voices rose sweet and clear, and broke the silence of the sacred place.

Those first mornings—there were never any others like them. With hushed, reverent footsteps he passed through the ante-chapel, with the effigies of the noble dead around him. He remembered in those early days—what very few men remembered as they hurried past—that beneath his feet, in the darkness and in the dust, were the bones of those old scholars of Trinity who, by their labours, their quiet unobtrusive labours, within these walls, had both enriched their country's literature and benefited the world by their discoveries in the fruitful fields of science.

The raw scholar from a country grammar school passed reverently through the dimly-lighted ante-chapel, with the great names of a great storied past around him.

Long familiarity had not yet blunted the first vivid impression. Surely here were the true Olympians!

Had not Bacon and Newton worshipped here ?

It quite shocked him, in that *exalté* state, to see the indecorous way in which the undergraduates of Trinity performed their part of the service.

There was so much audible whispering going on in the higher seats, that Herbert might be forgiven for mistaking the busy black figures with the college lists for the taking notes of it for the benefit of the Dean ; but they were only the college servants, pricking in the names of the men who were present at early chapel.

The Master of Trinity was always there, in his carved stall under the organ loft, an awful figure, in a magnificent rustling silk gown, with a great Prayer-book on a big velvet cushion in front of him. He never looked over the edge of the big book, he never looked down on the undergraduates below ; he sat serene and solitary, in awful state—an example of rigid devotion.

Mrs. Howell, the Master's wife, never appeared at early chapel ; but his niece, Lillian Howell, the Trinity Lily, as she was called, was seldom absent.

Herbert, in glancing up with a freshman's awe at the august presence in the great carved stall, beheld, not the Master, but the sweet, pale face and the clear critical gray eyes of the Trinity Lily.

He blushed like a schoolboy—he had left school quite three months—and never took his eyes off his book again until the end of the service.

He modestly asked his new friend Geraint about her as he sat at breakfast with him half an hour later.

'You needn't blush so, my dear fellow !' said Geraint kindly. 'She's quite beyond you—she is beyond all of us ; we have all, in our turn, been in love with her. She is well named—a cold, white, passionless Lily ; chills a fellow to the soul to talk to her. She's like that what-d'ye-call-her that a fellow carved out of marble ? I suppose Pygmalion 'll come by some day and wake her up.'

Herbert sighed and flushed scarlet. It was the early days of his blushes ; they soon ceased to come so readily.

'She's not my sort,' said the good-natured giant with a laugh ; 'I prefer a real flesh and blood woman. I'll show you one to-night, Flowers, that'll beat her out and out, if you'll come to a "coffee" with me after Hall.'

CHAPTER III.

THE BELLES OF CAMBRIDGE.

'I think we are not wholly brain.'

GERAINT was as good as his word. He called for Herbert after Hall faultlessly attired in evening-dress beneath his purple undergraduate gown, with a hothouse flower in his button hole.

Herbert had no evening clothes, and his boots were dreadfully thick. Geraint looked him over critically.

'I say, old fellow,' he stammered, blushing like a girl, 'if you wouldn't mind, you know, my things 'll just fit you. There are heaps of them down there : take your choice.'

Herbert accepted the loan, and took his choice; but the evening-coat, the smallest that he could find in Geraint's voluminous wardrobe, hung in graceful plaits over his youthful figure. He was very glad to cover it over with his gown, and hide his shamefaced blushes in the darkness of the quad. He had never worn an evening-coat before. At the gate of Trinity, Geraint hailed a hansom, and the friends drove rapidly to the classic shades of Chesterton.

The cab stopped at a handsome house, standing modestly back from the road, a miniature shrubbery shutting it out from too inquisitive eyes, with a convenient little carriage-drive winding through it, which ensured the utmost privacy to visitors in coming and going. Not even a lamp cast a welcoming ray across the threshold; the Jehus of Cambridge knew the way very well, and there had never been an accident to speak of, though carriages with hilarious occupants were coming and going through that gloomy shrubbery at all sorts of hours.

Geraint dismissed the cab before he knocked at the door.

'You needn't play unless you like, Flowers,' he said in a low voice, as he put out his cigar in the porch. 'You can look on.'

He touched a bell as he spoke, an electric bell, that rung somewhere with a mysterious, confidential sound. A boy with innumerable buttons opened the door into a small vestibule dimly lighted, and having admitted them and closed the door, threw open a baize-covered door into an inner hall.

Coming in from the darkness, the sudden glare of light for a moment blinded Herbert, as he stood on the threshold awkwardly divesting himself of his cap and gown.

There were other caps and gowns hanging in the brilliantly-lighted hall beside his, some with ribbons to them, he remarked, as with feeble wonder he looked round at the very novel scene before him. It was a large entrance-hall full of palms, and pictures, and statuary, and rose-coloured lamps, and soft carpets, with heavy

silken hangings before the doors ; a delightful scent of flowers, a low subdued sound of music and laughter, an intoxicating atmosphere of warmth, and ease and *bien être*.

At least, this is how Herbert summed it up in his own mind, as he tossed restlessly in his bed some hours later.

A demure looking maid-servant led them into an inner room where coffee was dispensed at one end of a long table, and stronger waters at the other.

Several men were gathered at this end of the table, and Geraint joined them. Herbert heard the popping of champagne corks while he modestly drank a scalding cup of coffee. He was far too nervous and bashful to help himself freely to milk.

As he punished himself dreadfully in trying to swallow it, a white arm, the roundest, whitest, most beautifully-shaped arm he had ever beheld, pushed the heavy curtain that hung between the rooms aside.

'Oh, Mr. Geraint we thought you were never coming !'

The voice belonged to the arm—a rich full voice, with latent depth and power in it, like the arm. The beautiful sinuous thing was too round, and firm, and velvety, not to suggest strength—latent strength, somewhere.

'I have not only come, but I have brought a friend,' said Geraint, laying down his glass and introducing Herbert. 'Flowers of Trinity—Miss Bellenden.'

Herbert modestly bowed to the owner of the arm, and the owner of the arm vouchsafed him a momentary glance, and dismissed him from any further notice or attention during the remainder of the evening.

Only a momentary glance, but it embraced every detail of his face and figure, even the plaits and puckers of his ill-fitting evening-coat.

The face was true to the promise of the arm when Herbert dared to raise his eyes to it. He was so sublimed by the sight of so much beauty that he dropped them again with a blush directly. He need not have distressed himself ; the gleaming teeth and the flashing eyes were smiling upon someone else now.

Miss Bellenden's rooms were very full that night, and Herbert remarked that the guests were nearly all men—University men—and that the ladies—there were only quite a small sprinkling of ladies present—were young and lovely, and had no chaperons.

The light was soft and rose-hued, and the room was warm and pleasant, and there was a delicious languorous odour in the air that steeped the senses like a narcotic.

But it was all quite *en règle*. The lovely hostess was a lady received into the best society in Cambridge, and her guests were ladies from a neighbouring seminary of sound learning, affiliated to the University.

But it was Bohemia, nevertheless.

The sweet girl-undergraduates, in their dainty toilettes, and with their charming affectation of superior learning, were quite aware it was Bohemia.

They had left their chaperon at home (correcting, no doubt, their untidy exercises) ; but they had come in a body, and unity is strength.

It was certainly not one of these chaste divinities—they all wore glasses : dainty, piquant little glasses, which were very becoming, and imparted a quite superior and scholarly air—that was seated at the piano and the men were crowding round. Herbert could not see the singer ; he could only see her shoulder—glimpses of it, rather ; not enough of it at any time to satisfy himself if it were velvet, or flesh and blood.

It was the most velvety shoulder he had ever beheld, and there was a good deal of it, as he saw by degrees.

But he could hear the song. It might have been a funeral dirge, it was so utterly gruesome and despairing ; and the full rich voice was full of tears, and lamentation, and woe.

There was quite a cheerful round of applause when the song was finished, and a girl, a bright brunette sitting beside Herbert, whispered scornfully behind her fan :

‘That Hebe Bellenden is at her tricks again !’

‘Who is it to night ?’ said her companion.

‘Oh, a Trinity man—that blonde fellow, bending over her. It was a John’s man before he came in.’

‘It doesn’t matter to Hebe which,’ said the other with a laugh ; ‘she encourages them all.’

‘She’s the horriddest little flirt I ever saw,’ said the brunette impatiently. ‘I have no patience with her ; it’s quite disgusting.’

The men were all crowding round Hebe Bellenden as she rose from the piano, and Geraint was offering her his arm ; one man was carrying her gloves, another had got her fan, and a third her bouquet, as she passed up the room, followed by her little court.

‘No ; I don’t call her a flirt,’ said the other girl reflectively, watching the procession with critical eyes. ‘See, she gives all the men the same encouragement ; it is part of her *role*. I don’t think she can help it. I should rather call it Hebe’s fault !’

‘Hebe’s fault !’

She was not wholly divine, then, as our impressionable undergraduate—round-eyed and open-mouthed—had taken her to be, as she swept past him up the room.

She was human enough to be ‘made up of charms and simple wiles, praise, blame, love,——’ No ; he dared not follow the poet any further in that delightfully suggestive simile.

It was quite a relief to hear that she had a fault—a quite pardonable, and wholly delightful fault—that brought her down to a human level.

The youngest Miss Bellenden was the acknowledged Belle of

Cambridge, and just now the reigning beauty and toast of the University, so the ingenuous freshman may be forgiven for his innocent wonder and admiration.

The sisters Bellenden had long been known as the Belles of Cambridge, but the elder sister's beauty was on the wane—it had lasted very well, and still lighted up well at night, if the lamps were carefully shaded; and she had still her shoulders and her arms left, and her gleaming teeth, and brilliant eyes, and classic coils of blue-black hair.

The younger Miss Bellenden was strangely unlike her sister, except that both had the same velvety complexion and dazzling white skin.

Hebe Bellenden wore pearls at her throat; but the pure velvety whiteness of her lovely shoulders made them look dull and sickly in comparison. They were wonderful shoulders! Hebe talked very little, only in monosyllables, or with her eyes, which were soft and dark and velvety, like her skin, and discreetly veiled by long, sweeping lashes: but her shoulders spoke volumes!

Unkind criticism attributed the peculiar metallic sheen of her pale dead-gold hair to art, and the delicate stationary flush of the wild-rose on her perfect cheek, and the vermilion of her small, straight mouth, to the same obliging handmaid; but these were her detractors, the shadows cast by her surpassing loveliness.

It was of no use asking any of the *ingenu* girl-undergraduates to sing after Hebe, so Miss Bellenden pounced upon a weak-faced blinking little man, that Herbert remembered to have seen at Trinity, and led him captive to the piano.

He happened to be the best comic singer in the Varsity, and, to the huge delight of an æsthetic audience, he accompanied himself with one finger on the piano while he regaled his listeners with the latest thing in music-hall breakdowns.

The girl-undergraduates left early, and as there were no introductions at Miss Bellenden's 'coffee,' they left as they came, unknown, which saved a good deal of possible embarrassment in the future.

After the ladies left a change came o'er the scene. The men went into the outer room for a smoke and champagne, and Herbert feebly inquired for some coffee. It was quite cold now, and the woman servants were gone, and he had a certain awful consciousness that it was past ten o'clock and that he ought to be in college.

He looked helplessly over at his Mentor, but Geraint had eyes for no other person in the room but the lovely Hebe, and they were just now cutting for partners.

Herbert didn't see the cards brought in; but green tables were spread, and the men were gathered round. There was one lady at each table, and the foolish freshman, who lounged about the room and looked on, grew so excited in the game that he felt in the

empty pockets of his borrowed clothes for some loose money to stake upon it.

Miss Bellenden, he remarked, with a certain awe-struck admiration, played like an old campaigner. She never missed a point ; she never allowed her attention to wander. Her brilliant eyes had a fierce, hungry heat in them that he had never seen in a woman's eyes before. Her strong, white, merciless hands gathered in a rich golden harvest from the foolish, wine-heated undergraduates, who grew pale and flushed by turns as their term's allowance melted away before her.

He turned away from the contemplation of the elder Miss Bellenden's opulent charms, and the greed in her cruel face, to the adjoining table, where Hebe Bellenden sat among her admirers.

She was winning, too ; there was quite a little heap of gold and some fluttering bank-notes on the table by her side ; but her face was neither flushed nor eager.

She won so easily, with an indifferent, scornful ease, and when the game was over she threw the cards down on the table, and gathered in her gains with a little disdainful smile curling her thin scarlet lips, as if she despised them for being so easily won.

A man who had been playing rose at the end of the game and offered his seat to Herbert. He declined it with a feeble attempt at a smile.

'No, thanks ; I have no money.'

'Oh, that doesn't matter ; let me be your banker !'

The man pulled out a handful of gold as he spoke, and offered it to Herbert. He took a sovereign with a shame-faced, guilty air.

'No, thanks ; I won't have any more,' he had just sense enough to say as the man pressed the gold upon him. 'You must tell me to whom I am indebted ?'

'Oh, Grinley, of King's.'

Herbert took the vacant seat, and then a strange thing happened : between him and the lovely, scornful face rose, somewhere out of his inner consciousness, a pale, pleading face, and the kind eyes looked at him with a sad pity.

'We are waiting for you, Mr. —'

'Flowers,' said Geraint, filling up the hiatus.

'Oh, a friend of yours ?'

'Yes ; you must be merciful to him for my sake.'

Hebe laughed a low, soft, delightful little laugh, that showed all her pretty white teeth.

'For your sake !'

Herbert's vision was gone, and the red lips and the velvety eyes were smiling upon him and thrilling him with a strange unaccountable fascination.

He played recklessly, and lost, and rose up hurriedly from the table. He had no more money ; it was no use sitting there.

Geraint rose too, and looked at his watch.

'I'm afraid you ought to have been in college an hour ago, Flowers.'

Herbert grew white and cold with a sudden fear; he wasn't sure, in those early days, what awful thing was going to happen to him.

'And you?' he said rather shakily, for the incidents of the night had upset him.

'Oh, it doesn't matter for me!' said the other with a laugh, in which all the men at the table joined.

'What, going so early!' exclaimed the elder Miss Bellenden, looking reproachfully at Geraint.

He nodded significantly towards Herbert, who caught the word 'Freshman!' and a baleful light in the lady's fine eyes at the same moment.

Hebe Bellenden came forward to wish him good-night.

'I am so sorry to have won your money,' she said sweetly; 'you must come again another night, and win it back.'

Geraint stayed behind saying his *adieux*, while Herbert put on his cap and gown in the hall. Perhaps she was telling him to come again and win his money back.

The men stepped out briskly into the moonlight, for there were no hansoms at that late, or rather early, hour.

No hansoms, and no proctors, and the streets silent and deserted. They walked in silence till they came to the foot of Magdalene Bridge. Geraint stopped, and dropped the end of his cigar into the river.

The moonlight touched the old college walls with a transient glory, softening its harsh outlines, and mellowing and subduing the squalid details of the buildings on the opposite bank. A star shot across the sky and seemed to drop in the dark water below.

Both the men looked down; they could hear the gurgling of the water beneath the bridge, and the sighing of the night wind in the old college trees.

'I wouldn't go there again if I were you, Flowers,' said Geraint, breaking the silence. 'It isn't exactly the place for you. I wanted to show you a real flesh and blood woman, and—and—you've seen her.'

'She's the loveliest creature I ever beheld in my life!' interrupted Herbert with impetuous ardour.

'Ye-es, she's all that; but she's, well—you must know it sooner or later—she's a tiger!'

Herbert didn't go to early chapel the next morning. He woke with a racking headache, and feeling seedy and disorganized generally. He had no appetite for his breakfast, and still less for his lunch, for beside his plate, when he came in from lecture, he saw a letter from the Dean requesting the favour of a call.

It was not altogether the effect of the previous night's dissipation that made his cheek pale, and his legs feel ridiculously shaky, as he

mounted the Dean's staircase. He was accustomed to take his stairs, as he had a good many to mount to his attic, two at a time, but one of the Dean's was quite as much as he could manage now.

The Dean was alone, and standing with his back to him at a reading-desk at the end of a long room. He came forward with a —no, not a frown—a pained smile on his kind face, and gave the pale, trembling scholar his hand and pointed him to a chair by the fire. He was scarcely past middle-age, but his face was marked with strong manly furrows, and his hair was already iron-gray.

'I dare say you know why I have sent for you, Mr. Flowers?' he began in that soft, slow voice that disarmed the reckless hardihood of the black-sheep of Trinity; 'and no doubt you will be able to explain. I am informed that you were not in college until long past midnight.'

And Herbert explained. He could not look into those kind eyes and tell a lie. Of course he did not necessarily say anything about tigers. The Dean accepted his explanation, and dismissed him with a warning.

He still felt dreadfully guilty at chapel, as he sat, self-condemned, on his freshman's seat in that conspicuous front row, and felt that the Master's severe eyes were upon him, and the eyes of all the fellows in the stalls, and the singing boys in the choir, and, above all, the Trinity Lily in the corner, looking so white, and pure, and spotless among all those dusky academic gowns.

He need not have troubled himself, and blushed so furiously, when she looked gravely over at the freshman's seat; she was not looking at him.

When he reached his room after chapel he found a little narrow slip of printed paper on his table, which informed him that he was 'gated' for nine o'clock for the remainder of the term.

He began about this time to forget to put that fondly-treasured botanical specimen that Muriel Spurway had given him beneath his pillow; there was very little of it left, indeed, to put anywhere now. He had so often forgotten to remove it lately, and his bed-maker had heartlessly thrown it aside; and one day he picked it out of the dustpan. Still there were a few thorns left, and a prickly stalk.

CHAPTER IV.

'GATED.'

'O Freshman, running fast to seed!
'O Scholar, redolent of weed.'

HERBERT did not see any more of the Belles of Cambridge during the remainder of the term. And as for his lost sovereign, he was foolish enough, not only not to regret it, but to weakly regard it as

well lost, as it had won for him that delightful invitation that was for ever ringing in his ears : ' Come again, Mr. Flowers, and win it back !'

That stern mandate of the Dean's which had condemned him to incarceration within the walls of his college—not exactly solitary confinement, as there were probably three hundred of his fellow human beings within easy reach—put it quite out of the question, his paying another visit to La Maison Bellenden this term.

He could call ; no, he wasn't quite sure that he could. He had a vague suspicion that the 5 p.m. society and the 12 a.m. were widely different. He had met the sisters once in the streets of Cambridge, and they had passed him unrecognising ; and he had sat through a whole service at King's exactly opposite Hebe Bellenden, who was dressed so quietly and behaved so devoutly that she might have been an angel taking an airing. No ; on the whole, he decided it would be better not to call.

By dint of scraping up all his pocket-money for the term, he managed to repay Grinley, of King's, the temporary loan. Grinley hadn't rooms in his college ; his lodgings were in King's Parade, opposite—and very handsome rooms they were. Whether they were Queen Anne, or Early Plantagenet, or simply æsthetic, Herbert could not tell, but they impressed him as the best rooms he had seen in Cambridge.

Geraint's, though lavishly furnished with an utter disregard to cost, were quite commonplace in comparison. There was no ostentation here, no overcrowding. There were rare engravings on the walls, and priceless old china in cabinets and on brackets and choice editions of scarce books on the long, low book shelves and, in one recess, curious arms of foreign workmanship and design. There were no cups stuck about in prominent positions, as in most men's rooms ; no photographs on the walls of college clubs, of incidents of the field and the river ; no athletes, or jockeys, or opera-dancers in scant costumes ; not a woman's portrait in the room.

There was one other occupant of the room when Herbert entered, a huge mastiff stretched out at his full length on a rug before the fire. It rose slowly when he came in the room, and stretched itself leisurely, and shook its yellow coat, and came across the room with great strides to meet him. Herbert stopped, and the dog stopped, for there was a look in the creature's eyes he did not like, and showing his fine teeth, he uttered a low threatening growl like muttered thunder.

' Hush, Dear Boy !' said his master with a laugh, ' it's all right ;' and the faithful creature stood aside and let Herbert pass. ' He chooses my friends for me,' said Grinley with his mocking smile, that might be earnest or not. ' He only barks at poor men. If you had happened to be rich, you would have had a different reception. I don't know whether it is instinct or his natural snob-bishness, but I never knew him make a mistake.'

'He is quite right in my case,' said Herbert stiffly. 'His instinct was unerring; he knows I have no right here, except, indeed, to repay my debt, the money you were so kind to lend me at Miss Bellenden's,' and he laid the sovereign, that had been burning in his pocket, down on the table by Mr. Grinley's side.

'Yes; ah, yes—to be sure; I had forgotten all about it. You haven't been down there lately?'

'No,' said the other modestly; 'I am "gated."'

Grinley laughed—a low, unmusical, mocking laugh—and Herbert reddened.

'My dear fellow,' said Grinley, with quite a regal unbending of dignity that flattered the foolish freshman immensely, 'that's one of the advantages of having rooms out of college. Now would you believe it, although this is my second year, I have never been "gated" once during the whole time I have been in residence.'

'But you were out later than I was the other night. We left you behind.'

Grinley playfully jingled some loose gold pieces in his waistcoat pocket, Herbert's last sovereign among them.

'You have much yet to learn of the ways of Cambridge,' he said, with his low, cynical laugh. 'I have never found a door yet, in this place or in any other, that a golden key will not open.'

Both men laughed—one because he had the magic 'Open Sesame,' the other because he hadn't; and Herbert if he had been wise, and not a foolish, impressionable, and utterly weak-minded undergraduate, would have summoned up courage at this juncture to go away. But he only feebly remonstrated when Grinley asked him to have some tea, and pointed with an idiotic smile to Grinley's canine Mentor.

'Oh, he allows me to choose for myself sometimes. He is always willing to overcome his natural prejudices for a sufficient *raison d'être*. Here, Dear Boy!'

The great creature came softly over, and put his huge paws on his shoulders, looking up, with a strange intelligence, into his face. Grinley spoke to him a few words in an unknown tongue, looking straight into his beautiful brown eyes as he spoke, and laid his hand on Herbert's arm.

Softly and cringingly, with his tail between his legs and his head hinging down with an apologetic air, the great beast came over and put his cold muzzle into Herbert's hand, and stretched himself out at his feet.

'You have got his confidence, Flowers, from this hour,' said his master; 'mind you never abuse it. You will find it safer to keep him a friend than an enemy.'

And the lovely tawny creature sat at his feet looking up with its soft, blinking eyes into his artless face, while his master drew from the boy the simple story of his life. He told him willingly enough

about his school, his home, the Squire at the great house across the river ; but he didn't tell him about the little mother.

'Isn't there a son of Spurway's here ?' he asked presently, having led up to the subject in the most easy, natural way in the world.

'Yes ; Tom Spurway, at Trinity, lucky fellow !' And Herbert sighed as he thought of his own meagre heritage, the musty classics, and the old coach's silver inkstand.

'Fine property, eh ?'

'Finest in North Devon ; Sir Hugh hunts the western division ; has a kennel at Fairy Cross, and the best shooting in the county.'

When he had pumped the artless lad quite dry, and extracted all the information he wanted from him, he let him go, and Dear Boy accompanied him gravely to the door.

'Good-bye, Dear Boy ! good-bye, old fellow ; remember we are friends !' Herbert called out, as the great creature stood watching him down over the stairs.

Grinley surprised Herbert some days after this by a visit after Hall. A man on his staircase—Brown by name—had found him out, and, being of a cheerful and sociable turn of mind, usually dropped in after Hall to have a little chat and a cup of coffee—if it happened to be going—before settling down to work for the night.

The reading men of the University plead a precedent for this custom, handed down from old monastic times, when the old, old occupants of those venerable walls used to collect together after their temperate meals, in knots of three or four, for the purposes of meditation.

It was not exactly for meditation that Brown sought Herbert's society after Hall. The new friends had a good deal in common. Both were poor, and both had come up with the laudable intention to work.

Brown was very much in earnest, and he had reason to be. His father, as he told Herbert in the course of their post-prandial conversations, was a poor country parson with seven small children, and—he wasn't exactly starving him-self, but he was cheerfully submitting to all sorts of privations to send his eldest son to Cambridge, to his own college, where he had done so well, and where, with paternal fondness, he hoped his son would do better, and some day win a name for himself, and a decent position, and maybe, on his broad shoulders, help those little Browns at home to mount the social ladder too.

Brown's shoulders were broad enough, and his intentions were excellent ; but his face, or what little could be seen of it through a fragrant cloud of Latakia, an atmosphere that usually hung around Brown like an halo, was weak and utterly wanting in purpose. It was a kind face, nevertheless—a small, round, good-tempered, kindly face, surrounded with a mop of sandy hair.

He was not inappropriately christened Cherub by the men of his

college, not only from the cherubic outline of his countenance and its wholesome fresh colour, as from its peculiar trustfulness of expression.

He was the most open and communicative fellow in Trinity. He had already, quite confidentially, told every man on his staircase that he was engaged, and that the name of his charmer was 'Maria.' It was needless for him to expatiate upon the charms of his Maria; he had quite a gallery of photographic representations of her—from the age of six upwards—on the walls of his room, beside an album full of Marias on his table.

Brown's Maria was quite a standing toast of Trinity.

But we are keeping Mr. Grinley, of King's, waiting in the cold.

He was not alone; Geraint had come up with him to show him the way. Not that there was any danger of missing it; he couldn't go up higher, unless he went out on the roof.

There could not be anything more opposite than the two men who came into Herbert's room together. Grinley was a good deal older than the average undergraduates of Cambridge—older and more worn, not with the honest wear of 'work,' which leaves its mark like a refiner's fire, but the ineffaceable stamp of a dissipated youth. His chin was clean-shaven, and his thin lips were shaded by a dark moustache, and his bright dark eyes were discreetly veiled beneath a languid indolent manner that seldom allowed him to look anyone in the face. The only striking feature in his handsome, impassive face was his teeth, which were remarkably white and large, and slightly prominent.

He was studiously careful and neat in his dress, and wore, not at all ostentatiously, magnificent jewellery. An opal pin, surrounded with very brilliant diamonds, blazed on his shirt-front, and he wore a ring to match on the little finger of his left hand.

Herbert noted these details—insignificant to other men—with a sense of their incongruousness in his own mean room. He received his visitors in a shamefaced, embarrassed way, cautioning them to beware of the beams, and recommending them to keep as nearly in the middle of the room as possible, as both being rather above the average height, it was the only part of the room where they could stand upright in safety.

There was only one easy-chair in the place, which Brown already occupied, and the crippled couch Herbert had taken off from the former tenant. He had got used to its peculiarities by this time, and adapted himself to its defects; a broken spring or two, more or less, was of no account when he had got used to it; but a tendency the back legs had to shift their position and suddenly collapse rendered it difficult for anyone but the owner himself to preserve a dignified balance upon it.

Herbert pushed forward a couple of hard Windsor-chairs to his visitors.

'I'm afraid,' he said, with a feeble smile, seeing them make for

the unreliable couch, 'that is not a very comfortable seat ; it has a game leg.'

'Be accurate, my dear fellow,' interrupted Brown, correcting him—'two.'

'Very good—very good,' murmured Grinley, showing all his shining teeth, while Geraint laughed good-humouredly, and took the uninviting Windsor chair.

The other followed his example, and took a chair the other side of the table, with a perspective view of the fire, which was the only cheerful thing in the room.

From this position, which, as a set-off, included a decided draught from the ill-fitting casement behind, Grinley took a rapid survey of the room.

There was very little to survey.

The walls of the poor scholar's den were quite bare, with the exception of a few college notices, stuck up with pins—he had removed the unique sporting portraits (minus the heads) left by the late tenant—and the floor of the room was nearly bare, too, as that portion of the large Axminster rug described in the inventory as 'five holes and a fringe' had been judiciously foreshortened by the bed-maker, and now covered a limited space by the hearth.

There were no pots, silver or pewter, stuck up in conspicuous places, no knick-knacks or brackets in the corners (they would have occupied a position very near the ground, as the gradient of the ceiling was curiously steep) ; there were no five o'clock tea-tables or jaunty chairs lying in wait for the unwary. It was as arid a desert as any scholar could desire.

Grinley smiled—a slow, quiet smile, that only curled the corners of his mouth. It certainly was not worth while to sit any longer in a draught.

He dragged his chair over to the fire, and rubbed his hands meditatively in the grateful warmth. As he rubbed them, the opal on his finger gleamed blood-red in the firelight. He turned it round in an absent manner, as if it were an evil-eye, upon each of the men who sat in a circle round the hearth.

It was pale and colourless when he turned it upon Herbert, and warmed up into a dull red heat when it fell upon Geraint ; but when it turned in the direction of Brown—simple, easy-going Brown—it leaped up into a blood-red flame.

He tried the experiment twice, in his absent way, with the same result. With a gambler's acceptance of fate, he ought, if he had been wise, to have taken the warning, and let the foolish undergraduate go.

But who is wise in time ? One sees things so much clearer after the event. Grinley sat on, and the opal flashed its warning in vain.

He took out a cigarette-case and a pack of cards from his pocket ; and presently the foolish boys, who ought to have been at

their work—the curfew had rung long ago—were deep in the mysteries, the little innocent mysteries, of nap.

For some time there were no great losses on either side; and presently Geraint, who was reckless, and indifferent as to the extent of his losses, suggested higher stakes, and with the utmost complacency lost ten pounds.

Herbert and Brown looked across the table at each other with a certain stricken look. Grinley surprised it half-way.

'Is nap a game you can be cheated at?' asked the Cherub innocently.

Grinley's brow darkened.

'I never knew gentlemen cheat at nap,' he said crushingly, with a swift suspicious look at Brown; 'nor in any other game, for the matter of that.'

'Oh, I didn't mean anything,' said Brown meekly.

Grinley was so far above showing malice for any covert suggestion there might be in Brown's remark, that when he rose to go, that candid and ingenuous undergraduate was three sovereigns and some odd shillings richer for his visit. That was heaping coals of fire in earnest.

The fickle goddess Fortune had also visited Herbert to the tune of a couple of very welcome guineas.

The two foolish fellows rejoiced over their first success—when Grinley had gone, and nearly killed himself in going down Herbert's staircase—and spent the remainder of the evening, and far into the night, in making abstruse calculations into the odds of nap, allowing a fixed percentage in favour of luck.

Brown, who was of a very sanguine temperament, went so far as to start a theory that, by judicious and systematic playing, a better income could be gained at nap than in the Church; and further to illustrate his theory, he went to bed, and slept so late the following morning that he missed his college chapel and two divinity lectures.

Fortune, that fickle goddess, every philosopher knows, is never to be counted upon. She lures a man on with those shining untrustable eyes of hers, and then she deserts him. She only treated Herbert as she treats all the rest of her votaries, especially the weak ones who haven't sufficient backbone to keep themselves out of mischief.

It was the old, old story. Herbert was so intoxicated at winning, so lured on with his first success—the devil's success, which he metes out so handsomely to beginners—that he plunged eagerly, night after night, into the exciting game of nap.

It didn't matter much while he and Brown played alone, while the night winds whistled eerily round his attic; they had only their golden first-fruits to lose, and this changed hands so frequently that Brown's three guineas were as often in Herbert's pocket as that industrious scholar's two guineas in Brown's. But when they

carried their luck with them a couple of floors lower, things were altered. Maybe Luck objects to every change that is not of her own making. Grinley gave Geraint his revenge a few nights later, and the two poor scholars were of the party.

Herbert staked his little all, and lost it, and Geraint good-humouredly insisted on lending him five sovereigns, *pour l'encourager*. He staked these and lost. Well, the world did not exactly come to an end, but there was a great singing in his ears, as if a cannon had gone off and would never cease reverberating, and he found his eyes suddenly full of tears. He had just remembered the little mother at home, who at that very moment was most likely on her knees praying for him with all her heart!—and—and he was wasting her poor little substance, the result of, oh! so much self-denial and economy, in riotous living!

He remembered this when it was too late, and a big lump came up in his throat and his eyes filled with sudden tears of contrition, and he rose unsteadily from the gaming-table, where Brown was winning hilariously, and left the room.

Grinley rose, too, and followed him. The staircase was dimly lighted, as college staircases are wont to be, but Grinley found his man before he had got half-way up his ladder. He laid his hand heavily on the boy's shoulder, and turned him round.

'This kind of thing doesn't do for you, Flowers,' he said not unkindly. 'You haven't a fortune to lose; but you have what I shall never have—God help me!—a name to win. Take my advice: don't do it again.' And before Herbert could find words to answer him, he had put the money he had won from him back into the boy's hand, and had disappeared down the dark stairs.

Herbert didn't play nap any more that term; and Brown, whose lightly-won guineas were burning dreadful holes in his pocket, bought presents for Maria and each of her five sisters, and for the seven young Browns in the dear old country vicarage, and went home for his Christmas vacation quite happy!

CHAPTER V.

DULCE DOMUM!

HERBERT went down at Christmas, and spent the short vacation at Bideford. He travelled third-class by the same train, as it happened, as that hopeful scion of nobility, Tom Spurway.

The fellow-commoner, who travelled in a saloon carriage, with a foot-warmer and a mountain of rugs, and wore a fearful and wonderful thing in travelling-wraps, and bought newspapers at every station and smoked cigars on every platform where the train stopped, never saw Herbert the whole way down. He couldn't afford to, for Lord Francis Wallop, Lord Portsmouth's third son,

was travelling with him, and he couldn't be expected to notice 'a confounded beggar of a sizar.' Lord Francis left him at Barnstaple, and then he became suddenly conscious of Herbert's existence, and bawled out to him, as he stood beating his arms for warmth on that bleak, inhospitable platform, to give him a light.

Herbert civilly reminded him that he wasn't the porter, and continued his exercise, whereupon he 'confounded the beggar's impudence!' during the remainder of the journey.

The little mother was waiting for Herbert at the Bideford railway station, and threw her arms around him, and kissed him before all the porters, and would insist upon carrying his rug and umbrella. An empty carriage with a pair of horses, and brilliant lamps, and a tall footman, and a broad coachman, and a foot warmer and additional rugs awaited the representative of the house of Spurway.

The carriage passed Herbert and his mother on the road, and the wheels bespattered them with mud, and the lamps, which shone like eyes of flame through the darkness, made a path of fire before them as they trudged merrily homeward, Herbert shouldering his bag and Lucy proudly carrying his sticks.

It was very remarkable how the place had changed during those few weeks of absence. How small and low the white-thatched Bideford cottages had grown! how mean the little old-fashioned shops on the quay! and even the fine old bridge was shorter by two arches than it had been when he went away.

At least Herbert thought so; but the greatest change of all was in the dear old home of his childhood, which had suddenly collapsed, shrunk up as it were, into half its accustomed size.

Everything had dwarfed, inside as well as out, and grown suddenly shabby and mean. The narrow walls and homely hearth, sending out into the road its ruddy glow of welcome, had grown narrower and homelier than ever. The worn old-fashioned furniture, that had been new when the old coach married, had grown all at once shabby and faded. There were no tender memories of the dead to endear it to the Cambridge undergraduate, and he saw it, in these first moments of disillusion, in all its naked homeliness.

Only the little mother was unchanged. Herbert could not help acknowledging, as he sat talking in the firelight, with her hand in his, that he had not seen a woman in Cambridge, not even that august personage, the Master's wife, to say nothing of the wives of the dons and the professors and the Vice-Chancellor, who was half so lovely, and as near approaching perfection, as his own little mother.

And he was quite right!

Nevertheless he awoke up in a very ungracious state of mind on the morning following his arrival, and looked out of the casement of the little chamber of his childhood on the dear familiar scenes with a dreadful sense of humiliation.

It was a very unchristian and unreasonable spirit to return home

in after such a few weeks of absence, and reflected discredit upon the teaching of that religious foundation of which he was a member.

The little white town of Bideford lay beneath his window, very peaceful and quiet in the gray December morning; and the light mists were slowly rising from the river, and beyond lay the thickly-wooded hills, and the wide deer-park sloping steeply up to the great house.

Herbert turned away impatiently, and moodily descended the steep cottage stairs to begin the new life that awaited him.

The morning light revealed the leanness and the bareness of that poor home only more fully. There were no longer any roses on the porch to cover its nakedness; no homely flowers to brighten up the little bleak garden plot. The walls of Lucy's best parlour were stained with damp and mildew, and it had a faint odour as if it had been long unused, and the carpet was worn and faded, and the fire burnt unwillingly in the small old-fashioned grate.

Lucy did not tell him that there had been no fire in that dreary little bow-windowed room, that looked out into the wet garden, since he had been away, that she had sat in the kitchen beyond, with the small maid, all through the winter months to save fire and candle.

Since the widow's household had been diminished she had curtailed her poor little housekeeping expenses in order that the small sums saved should be devoted to her boy. She had grown miserly towards her own needs in order to minister to Herbert's.

Is not love incomplete without sacrifice?

It was a very gloomy vacation for Herbert. He shunned the busy streets of the town; he had no pleasure in the society of his former schoolfellows; he slunk away, as one ashamed, from the notice of the neighbouring gentry, when they were so condescending as to recognise the existence of the handsome undergraduate. But most of all he shunned the public highways, where he was likely at any time to meet the people from the great house.

Not that he did not walk out, day after day, with a secret tremor of hope in his heart that he should see one face from the Court that would repay him, in one brief glance, for all the weary vigils of hope and despair that he persuaded himself he had been keeping. The foolish boy used to hang about the country lanes in the gloaming of the raw December days, on the chance of getting a sight of his Dulcinea, as she rode back from hunting, without being recognised.

He had his wish sometimes, and would turn into a gate in time to see the gay cavalcade of huntsmen and dogs, and the noble master and his daughter in her scarlet habit, sweep by.

Her ladyship's carriage crossed his path one day, when he was more absent-minded than usual, and the broad coachman flicked his whip at him to get out of the way.

Herbert looked up, and seeing whose the carriage was, walked more leisurely than ever in the very front of the galloping horses.

John Thomas had them well in hand, but he grumbled quite audibly at the reckless youth; and when Herbert raised his hat gloomily to the ladies in the carriage, Lady Millicent stared blankly at him through her gold eyeglass, and enquired of her daughter 'who that extraordinary person was who tried to upset the carriage?'

She sent him next day, however, an invitation to a ball at Bratton Court—the tenants' ball!

Herbert knew exactly what this meant. Not only Farmer Hodge and his rosy-checked daughters, and the tenantry, high and low, on the Bratton Estate, and the honest tradespeople of Bideford who had the honour of serving the household of the Court, but the upper servants were included among the guests at the tenants' ball.

Herbert fumed, in the bitterness of his spirit, at this gratuitous insult. He would have written a reply full of delicate irony, and pointed with the finest wit, declining the honour; but Lucy, with tears in her eyes, begged him to remember that they had long eaten of the crumbs of that liberal table, and that her slender provision for future needs depended upon her ladyship's bounty. The deeply-wounded undergraduate fumed and raged inwardly, and finally tore up the missive; and Lucy wrote a pretty little note of thanks, declining the honour my lady and Miss Muriel were so kind as to do them.

Herbert relieved his mind after the event by reading to his mother the account of 'The Festivities at Bratton Court' which appeared in the columns of the *Bideford Chronicle*, interspersed with a pungent and satirical commentary that mightily relieved his over-charged feelings, if it did nothing else.

It was quite delightful to see the gloomy relish with which he read the interesting account of Lady Millicent's condescension in opening the ball with the steward, while Sir Hugh led off with the portly housekeeper, and Mister Tom favoured the children's pretty governess; and Miss Muriel—well, she might have danced with him if he had been there—consolated herself with the Honourable Plantagenet Glossop, who was staying at the Court.

Little Julie, the *gouvernante*, came to drink tea with Lucy the following day. She came to drink tea with her fellow-institutrice now.

She had grown ever so much prettier, this innocent, artless Julie, in the few months that had elapsed since Herbert used to visit her by way of the back stairs. There was a deeper light in her dark eyes, demurely shaded by sweeping black eyelashes, that threw quite a purple shadow on the delicate peach-bloom of her cheeks.

And her fringe? Well, her fringe was more pronounced, and arranged more artistically—perhaps Marie, my lady's own maid, had given her a few lessons. It was the most tantalizing, bewildering fringe. If you happened to look over her shoulder, or

she looked over yours—a pretty trick she had, in her artless way—it got in your eyes and tickled your cheeks, and got mixed up with your whiskers if you happened to be of the male sex, and sent creepy-crawly sensations down your spine, as if it were charged with electricity, like the fur of a black cat is reputed to be. At least it gave Herbert that uncomfortable sensation as she bent over him to read the account of the festivities at Bratton in the *Bideford Chronicle*.

It was no use his making room for her, and craning his neck on one side so as—well, not to embarrass her. He couldn't get away from the fringe, do what he would; and her warm breath was on his cheek, and the faint suggestive perfume of patchouli steeped his senses like a narcotic.

How full of *esprit* and innocent mirth she was, and with what delightful humour she recounted the droll incidents of the tenants' ball! She was really quite imitable when she portrayed portly Sir Hugh and the buxom housekeeper, and her ladyship, tall and stately, and the steward, who was the smallest and broadest of men, and lame to boot, opening the ball. She did the whole thing to the life in the middle of the room, till Herbert laughed as he had not laughed since he had ceased to be a boy.

She told him a great deal about the company staying at the Court, the Honourable Plantagenet, 'who was Meester Tom's boosom friend,' and Lord Francis, both of whom were deeply smitten by the very ordinary charms of Miss Muriel.

'Ah, you men, you have no sense!' Julie concluded, shrugging her pretty shoulders in her expressive foreign way. 'You don't know when a woman is *chic*. You admire a figure without grace, a face without complexion, couleur, expression; you adore blue eyes, like one enfant—red hair, coarse hands, coarse feet—bah! you have no sense!'

Herbert accepted the rebuke meekly: no doubt, like the rest, he had been guilty of worshipping the wrong woman. His idol was clay—very coarse clay, maybe: women find out these things quicker than men—but he did not love her one whit the less for it.

Julie came pretty often during those dark winter days, brightening up the bare room, and for the time dispelling the gloom that was settling over the boy's spirits—that Byronic gloom that, Lara-like, rejects sympathy, and expresses itself in turn-down collars, and a sombre, preoccupied cast of countenance, not unusual at a certain period of youth.

He liked Julie to come. Her little scraps of news from the great house fed the passion that was consuming him, or that he thought was consuming him. He always led her to talk upon one subject—a subject of which he could never tire—Muriel Spurway and her lovers.

The little governess knew quite well, her ladyship's own maid, had told her, that she had rejected Lord Francis, who was a

younger son, and that my lady was very anxious that she should be civil to Meester Tom's friend, 'the young Milord Plantagenet, who was coming in to so vere great richesse.'

Herbert listened greedily while she retailed all the backstair news of the Court, and ground his heel into the worn hearthrug, and laughed dismally when she was gone, with honest shame and self-contempt.

He was losing caste with him-self every day. He despised him-self for listening to this woman's vulgar gossip, and strode off moodily to long, solitary rambles upon the far-stretching sandy burrows by the gray wintry sea. He wrote a tragedy at this time in Greek, which relieved his feelings immensely. He read it to Lucy by the light of the solitary candle by the kitchen fire, and mouthed it so solemnly, and with such tragic effect, that the small maid, who was their companion in these evening gatherings, threw her apron over her head and began to howl.

Lucy could not view without much inward fear and trembling these unwonted moods of depression and gloom in her darling. She never even faintly guessed at their true cause, but put it down in her simple heart to some trouble that had befallen him at that terrible University.

She had suffered herself there. What high hopes and crushing disappointments she had suffered beneath those frowning college walls. Heaven only knew! She had buried them long ago beneath that little white stone, all aslant now, in Grantchester Churchyard. But the poor scholar who lay sleeping there, despite all his failures and disappointments, had never been subject to these strange moods of dejection and gloom: there was nothing morbid in that bright, sanguine nature, that was buoyed up to the list with dazzling visions of success to the very gate of failure.

Perhaps these lowering shades of gloom and despair are the peculiar atmosphere of genius.

Lucy did her best to brighten up the poor home, and make the boy's brief holiday less lonely and sad. Her own society she knew was dull and wearisome after his gay college life, so she encouraged that demure little puss Julie, whom she disliked, and distrusted in her heart, to make the long winter evenings pass more pleasantly to the ghomy undergraduate.

Julie bore with the boy's uncertain humour with delightful good-nature. She had sharper eyes than his mother; and she coaxed him, and petted him, and adored him in her artless foreign way, and looked up to him as a miracle of cleverness and learning, so that it was no wonder his foolish head was quite turned with her innocent adulation.

His spirits rose on these occasions. Who does not thaw beneath the warm breath of admiration—melt insensibly beneath the soft voices of praise? At such times it seemed to him that his hopeless passion was not worth the fuel it consumed—that this tender

creature, who was ready at any moment to flutter at his feet, was more worthy of his boyish love.

In those delightful walks beneath the stars, or on wild stormy nights, when it was necessary to enfold Julie in his own scanty wraps, and gather her in very closely beneath a single umbrella, when he escorted her back to the entrance of the great house, the foolish fellow would be beguiled into saying all sorts of pretty speeches, and pressing with unwonted warmth the little hand that clung so tenderly to his arm.

The only wonder was that he didn't say more ; it was not for lack of opportunity.

He never committed himself in these evening rambles, though he went quite as far as he well could go without doing so—perhaps farther ; and Julie was always on the watch to catch him, but he didn't give her the chance.

He went no farther, indeed, than the entrance to Bratton Court with her ; and the timid, fluttering little creature, with many innocent expressions of misgiving, would scurry away beneath the shrubs like a frightened rabbit.

But Julie did not run very far. She would stop when she had got out of sight of the lodge-gate, and, looking back in the direction of her retreating swain, indulge in gestures curiously expressive of scornful disdain, snapping her fingers and tossing her pretty head. She didn't at all mind the rain then, or snow or whatever happened to be coming down through the trees : and she had a habit of muttering softly to herself, 'Wait a minit ! wait a minit !' and she would walk leisurely back to the house, taking a strange kind of satisfaction in getting wet through.

No ; Julie was not taken in by the boy's pretty speeches ; she saw through the flimsy veil of sentiment, with those sharp eyes of hers, shaded so demurely beneath the sweeping black lashes, that his brave, simple, honest heart was untouched.

She knew, poor lonely little Julie ! the genuine thing when she saw it.

But Herbert did not always go home, like an obedient spaniel, when she dismissed him at the lodge-gate. He would loiter in the shadow of the trees, looking gloomily across the park at the great house, where there were lights shining in every window, and think of the days, that seemed so long ago, when he would part the rhododendrons and watch Muriel Spurway among her lovers on the lawn. The time had not come for him to go up to the front door yet ; and, as he turned gloomily away from the contemplation of the great house, a voice would sound out of the darkness—a whisper steal through the trees, 'Wait a minute ! wait a minute !'

The voice was familiar, but strange, for there was a tone of triumph and defiance in it that was new to him.

Was it prophetic ? He would go home through the darkness, with the rain pattering down upon him, softly whispering to him—

self, 'Wait a minute!' as Dick Whittington may have done when he retraced his steps from Highgate, and the bells were making strange music in his ears.

What a prophecy to a ragged little scullion! 'Turn again, Whittington, Lord Mayor of London!' Surely the promise bore the seed of the fulfilment!

'Wait a minit!' It was a human voice that spoke here, and there was nothing said about being Mayor of Bideford; but Herbert went on his way with a strange mysterious *Io Pæan* slowly swelling in his heart. Surely his time would come by-and-by; he had only to work, and 'wait a minit.'

Herbert went back to Cambridge the next morning. The sun had risen gloriously over the purple hills, and there was a shining light upon the distant sea, and all the mists that had hung for weeks over this damp, green West-Country had lifted, and the world spread out fresh and fair before him.

He remembered, as the Parliamentary train, with its freight of third-class passengers, steamed slowly out of the station, and Lucy, standing among the early market-people on the platform, waved a tender farewell to the dear face at the window, that she could not see through her tears; he remembered with a pang of contrition how tender and self-sacrificing her love was, and how selfish and unworthy his return!

Her benediction followed him as she returned to the poor home where he had chafed behind the galling bars of poverty. It looked very lonely without him. The door of his little room was open, and on the floor was strewn the litter and debris of packing, and the impression of his head was fresh upon the pillow. Lucy knelt down beside it, and buried her wet face on the vacant pillow, and prayed for her boy with strong supplication and tears.

It was the old tender story of the importunate widow storming heaven's-gate, and taking no denial, and surely the petition was not in vain!

CHAPTER VI.

WAIT A MINUTE!

'Resistless burns the fervour of renown,
Caught from the strong contagion of the gown.'

HERBERT returned to Trinity with a settled determination to work and—wait a minute.

It might be a long minute; minutes do vary: there are long ones in all lives; while some, alas! are winged; but however long this particular minute might be, he was quite prepared to wait.

He shut himself up in that bare room that looked out upon the leads, and sported his oak, and was deaf to all the blandishments of

that pleasant stream of University life that was bubbling in the quad below. The stream never reached up so high as Herbert's staircase, and few men troubled themselves about the poor sizar who kept in that exalted region sacred to the college cats.

Brown had come back with the same laudable intention. Maria had fired his ambition with a highly-coloured picture from life of the felicity of the friend of her bosom, who had recently married a curate, and begun housekeeping on the bewildering sum-total of one hundred and twenty pounds a year.

With this delightful vision before his eyes, Brown had come back with a Spartan determination to work. Maria had given him her last photograph, which stood in a magnificent frame upon his table, at his elbow, so that the reward of his labour should be always before his eyes.

He got accustomed to it after a time, and used to knock it over with his books, and it would lie face downwards for days, and the men of his staircase used to play strange tricks with it, and substituted an improper ballet-girl's likeness for it, and Brown never found it out, but went on thinking that Maria was there watching him, as he used to assure her she was in his letters, though she would have blushed dreadfully to see the indecent creature in the scanty skirts that the men of his acquaintance used to introduce to strangers as 'Brown's Maria.'

He had promised the dear girl to abjure cards and wines, and all naughty, wicked college ways that stood in the way of that dazzling vision of a curacy, and a wife, and a hundred and twenty pounds a year. There is a long avenue at Trinity, with the spire of a church faintly visible ever so far off in the distance, that is supposed to typify a University career. Brown used to walk up and down that avenue craning his neck to see the spire; but it was very seldom in sight in those foggy February days.

He had made a discovery during the vacation, or Maria had made it—that there was nothing like method. He had tried every other way of working and failed, and now—it was rather late to begin—he was going to be methodical.

He wrote out a set of rules which excited the wonder and awe of his staircase, and arranged the order of spending every hour of the twenty-four. Herbert copied them, so did several other men, and hung them up in their rooms in a prominent place.

The men of Trinity, if they are nothing else, are consistent, and as they consistently began the programme of the day's work at noon, they were severely exercised during the available hours of the twenty-four in trying to overtake seven o' clock, the hour set for beginning work. They all gave it up, including Brown, before the end of the week; but Herbert clung tenaciously to his old custom of attending morning chapel. He tried very hard to get Brown, the originator of the great scheme, to put in an appearance, but failed after the first morning.

The Dean had remarked unkindly about Brown's braces, which unfortunately were of a conspicuous colour, and which, owing to his hasty toilet, were not unfrequently to be seen hanging down in two scarlet lines beneath his surplice, to the amusement of the ingenuous freshmen as he walked up the chapel.

Brown objected to the Dean's interference in so personal a matter, and refused to give him a further opportunity for ill-matured criticism.

It was unfortunate for Brown, as he was reading for a degree in theology, and was going into the Church, and the irregularity of his attendance at chapel, had already called forth various epistolary remonstrances from the Dean.

Geraint's nice little parties after Hall were not so frequent now, as he was training for the Lent races, and his cox had cut off his wines, and restricted him to two pipes a day, and wouldn't allow him to be out of bed after ten.

In the raw February mornings he and Herbert used to do their half-hour's running in Fenner's before breakfast, and come back all aglow and with healthy young appetites needlessly whetted by the keen morning air: Geraint to a substantial training breakfast with the men of his boat, where the inevitable oatmeal porridge was followed by juicy beefsteaks, washed down with beer instead of tea. Herbert could smell the grateful aroma of Geraint's viands up in his garret—smells will ascend—while he sat feasting off his meagre commons, and reading 'Salmon's Comics,' which had the additional advantage, as a reading breakfast, of being as difficult of digestion as the beefsteaks the training men were consuming below.

Herbert had done a little tubbing when he first came up, and had even been in his college trial eights; but he had given it up regretfully, as poor men must give up many things, when he found that his slender little purse, where there were so few coins to elbow each other, and his reading were both unequal to the stress laid upon them.

He had paid his subscription, it is true, to the University Boat Club, and adopted its blazer; and he had also provided himself with the necessary boating flannels and the blazer of his own particular college, and a pleasing variety of other distinctive articles of University undress—and he had not paid for them.

He couldn't go to the Bellenden's 'at homes,' and win back his lost sovereign, for he hadn't a dress-suit.

He had begun to realise bitterly the hourly mortification of being poor. He told himself, with unbecoming impatience, that he had no business there in the society of rich men, that the University of Cambridge was no place for him, and most of all Trinity.

Other men may have told themselves the same, and yet, undaunted by the bitter truth, climbed to the highest round of that steep ladder that men call Fame.

Whewell, in his highlows and homely-cut garments, fresh from the carpenter's shop, no doubt had the same delightful experience, and the memory of those impecunious undergraduate days was still fresh in his noble mind beneath the rustling silk gown of the Master of Trinity.

There was one reflection that reconciled the poor scholar to the sacrifices he made so grudgingly—that the surrender of so many valuable hours in the short working *diem* to the exigences of training would have been that feather in the balance that would turn the scales in the Tripes.

The grapes, undoubtedly, were sour !

So he sat at home with his oak sported, while other men played football with their chances of high place and distinction.

When the Lent races were rowed he ran beside his boat on the towing-path, and witnessed that ignominious bump that brought tears into the eyes of every Trinity man on the bank, and saw the beautiful slender thing that bore the colours of the Second Trinity take a lower place on the river.

He told himself with becoming modesty that if he had been in the boat the disaster would not have happened, and the college would not have had to bear the humiliation of a defeat. The Second Trinity had been steadily going down for several years past, and men of a gloomy cast, as they walked back to their college—not behind the flag to a delightful 'orgy'—calculated with mathematical nicety how many more races it would take to get bumped off the river altogether.

Geraint, after all his training, was not in the boat; he had injured his shoulder at football a few days before the event came off, and at the last moment was scratched.

He howled over the defeat with Herbert and the unhappy cox, who was reported to have fainted on the bank, and with them arrived at the unanimous conclusion, delivered with much heat and superfluous oratory, that 'the college was going to the deuce !'

It may have been this awful prediction that animated the young freshman, when he ought to have been at work and preparing for his college exams, to suddenly begin training and enter himself as one of the representatives of his college in the University Athletic Sports that came off at Fenner's at the end of the term.

The athletes of Trinity looked coldly on : they were generally asleep in their warm beds when Herbert did his running in the shivery twilight of the raw winter mornings. He seldom practised with the others, and many men knew him only by sight, or by meeting him at lectures, or Hall, or chapel, or poring over books in the college library.

The day appointed for the C.U.A.C. Sports was brilliant. The sun had been out of town, so far as Cambridge was concerned, for a week, and now shone out quite unexpectedly from a sky that, to do honour to the occasion, had donned the University colour.

The wide ring was crowded with eager faces, but room had been made in front for the ladies—wives and daughters of the dons, and men connected with the University, mostly: portly matrons and tender young things timidly seeking shelter beneath their ample wings from attractive wolves in undergraduate clothing. Grave, be-spectacled girl-graduates from the neighbouring colleges of Girton and Newnham were there in their quaint old-world gowns, looking as if they had stepped out of Kate Greenaway's charming pictures.

It helped the youthful gladiators, this consciousness that bright eyes were watching them as they stepped into the ring, and saw behind the ropes, if not exactly—

‘A bank of maiden snow mingled with sparks of fire,’

certainly pretty girls enough to make the tournament worth the winning.

Some of the ladies wore the colours of their respective colleges modestly peeping out among their furs and laces. There was quite a group of girls who wore the colours of Trinity.

Herbert saw them as he stood inside the ring glowing, when he ought to have been shivering, in the—ahem!—very spare clothing worn by members of the C.U.A.C.

There were eight men entered for the event that Herbert had just stripped for—the high jump—another Trinity man being among the number, his old neighbour and fellow-countryman, Tom Spurway.

A Johnian led splendidly, with five feet clear, and the rest followed with varying success. Inch by inch the bar was raised, and the number of competitors fell off to four when it reached five feet eight: and still among them were two men of Trinity—the rest had modestly resumed their overcoats and retired from the contest.

The first man missed, but the Johnian and Spurway again cleared it, and the later was heard to murmur, as Herbert came blushing forward:

‘It's quite outwagious, that beggar going in!’

Nevertheless, Herbert cleared the bar splendidly, and a murmur of applause ran through the barriers.

The bar was raised another inch, and the number of competitors was reduced to three. The Johnian went at it first, in fine style, but came down ignominiously on the other side—bar and all. Spurway took it easily, and cleared it, and the murmur round the barriers again rose to a roar.

Herbert came modestly forward, with his accustomed little dance by the way, and again cleared it.

The bar was raised another inch, and the two men of Trinity stood out alone.

Herbert remembered, in that brief moment as he stood inside

the ring waiting for his turn, that when he made the record of the high jump at his old school sports Muriel Spurway had been one of the spectators ; and he looked round the ring, with a strange thrill of expectation, for a woman's encouraging glance.

He had not far to look. The colours of Trinity caught his eye, and the wearer was the Trinity Lily.

She was looking at him now as she was not accustomed to look at him in the college chapel.

Her eyes, which he never remembered to have seen before, were smiling upon him, and her white girlish face, so very, very white and lily-like against the old dark oak of the stalls, was flushed now, and her lips were open, as he came forward—after Spurway, who had come down three times, bringing the bar with him—as if she were saying :

‘ Wait a minute ! ’

He took it quietly, and cleared the bar at five feet ten in splendid style, amid the deafening cheers of the Varsity. .

He remembered ever after, that in that brief moment, when he rose like a bird in the air, that he had only seen one face in that sea of upturned faces that swam like faces in a moving glass before him.

What to him—flushed and heated with that first easy victory—was the three-mile race ?

The hot, foolish blood of youth was throbbing wildly in his veins, and the roar of the crowd was in his ears, and the face that had led him on to victory was before him.

He had nothing whatever to do but to keep it in view. He saw no other face as he swept round the course in the first round, keeping well to the front all the way. It was the goal he made for ; he knew exactly where to find it among a thousand others.

In his eagerness he had put on the pace too freely, and before the second round was passed was already blown and panting. There was only another man before him, who had taken the lead from the first, and kept it, and the rest were well behind.

Herbert felt that he was turning gray, and for a moment he gave it up, and determined to drop out of the race ; he even made a nice calculation of the exact spot, but he would have to pass the Trinity Lily first, and till then he told himself he would keep up the pace. He would retire from the contest with honour, while success was still possible ; but he could not fall out with that face before him. The crowd would come between them presently—and then !

She was looking at him as he passed with a strange pity in her eyes ; and her face he saw was as pale as his own, and her lips—those speaking lips—were framing an unspoken message :

‘ Wait a minute ! ’

He paused in obedience—but he did not fall out—and held back, and recovered his breath, following easily till he was quite at the rear of the rest.

The Trinity Lily smiled upon him encouragingly as he passed again, and he—unconsciously—smiled back.

It was the last round, and it didn't seem worth while to fall out now. And she was waving her handkerchief—he knew it was hers ever so far off—and he took it for a signal that he might increase his pace.

He did it slowly, by easy stages, so as to husband his breath for the final spurt. He had not run steeplechases over the steep hills of Devon for nothing. There were only alderbushes and squirrels to look on there, and they were but indifferent spectators; and here there were bright eyes, and a white pocket-handkerchief waving in the distance.

It was the handkerchief that did it.

Herbert made for that; he put out the strength that he had kept in reserve until that signal was waved, and he gained rapidly as he turned the corner of the course upon the men who were a long way ahead of him.

It seemed an impossible thing; and the crowd were cheering the man in front with a will. He did his best, and he did it splendidly, but he had no reserves of strength to fall back upon in those few closing yards where the race is lost or won.

Slowly Herbert gained on the panting few who had held out to the end; slowly, and almost sadly, for they deserved to win! He was conscious of being sorry for each man as he passed him; but that white handkerchief, waving in the distance, was impelling him forward.

He had no choice but to run.

What were the crowd cheering for? What was that wild acclaim that filled the air with a name strange to university fame?

'Flowers! Flowers!' the air was full of it; and still he ran, wondering, with that waving handkerchief in view. He saw nothing else; the sea of faces were all merged into one as he passed the foremost athlete with a bound within a yard of the winning-post, and won the three-mile race.

He was conscious only of being sorry for the other man, who had run so well, and missed by a yard! He was awfully sorry for him when it was all over, and the splendid fellow had come in panting and spent, with bloodshot eyes, and neck and face congested to a livid purple, and passing the tape, with reeling brain and exhausted strength, had rolled over like a log on the grass at his feet.

They bore him off between two other men, while the crowd were wildly cheering the winner; and when Herbert had struggled into a jersey, and was carried off in triumph by the Trinity men, he was so sorry and conscience-stricken for having beaten him—when he had deserved so well—that he could not meet the bright eyes that were smiling upon him; there was a very broadside of bright eyes smiling upon him now, as he passed modestly through the crowd to the pavilion.

CHAPTER VII.

A DARK NIGHT'S WORK.

SUCCESS is often more dangerous than failure. It is certainly not so good for us, which is a pleasing reflection to those who enjoy the more wholesome but less agreeable discipline.

It was certainly not so good for Herbert Flowers. If he had failed his college would have agreed that it served him right, and left him in peace to read without interruption to the end of his terms.

But success was quite a different thing. No man could win two cups without being the hero of the hour among the athletes of his college. The unknown sizar had his health drunk so many times that night by the men of Trinity that it was no wonder his foolish head was turned when he crept upstairs to his attic, in so bewildered a state that he forgot all about the familiar geography of his ceiling, and ran his head up against the beams in a manner that was quite unaccountable to him when he surveyed his mutilated countenance in the glass on the following morning.

It was very well for Herbert that it was so near the end of the term, and that those Latin hexameters he had been working upon off and on ever since he came up had arrived so near completion, for he had very little time for regular work now. He found himself all at once the lion of the athletic set. It was all to no purpose that he represented modestly to his friends that he was a reading man, and that athletics as a branch of study were not in the *menu* he had drawn out for his University course.

There were those two cups that brightened up his bare room like a pair of bright eyes witnessing against him. If he could carry off such trophies now, what could he do by-and-by, with systematic training?

The C.U.A.C. could not afford to let him slip through their fingers, much more his own college.

It was quite a new sensation being made a lion of, after a lengthened period of very wholesome neglect, and was, no doubt, very soothing to his feelings; and it would have been worthy of Diogenes himself if he had sulkily shut himself up behind his oak and refused to enter into more sociable relations with his fellow-students.

Herbert didn't exactly give a 'wine,' but he gave a 'coffee' after Hall to celebrate his successes.

He had to borrow all the other men's china on his staircase, and that brought him into more friendly relations with some of them, whom he had hitherto only bowed to stiffly when he happened to come across them on the stairs. Then the chairs were another difficulty; though the bedmaker had been persuaded to dust the

window-seat, still it wouldn't hold half the men who insisted upon coming.

The only thing to be done was to borrow the other men's chairs and let the men carry them up on their heads, which they did with a will, as if it were an ordinary post-prandial exercise.

They crowded into Herbert's room until there was not sitting-room for one more; but the late-comers good-naturedly accommodated themselves to the situation, and squatted on the floor.

Herbert could not see the faces of his guests after the first quarter of an hour, the place was so full of smoke. He poured out the coffee in the borrowed teacups, and sent the sugar-basin round; but it unfortunately got lost in the beginning of the entertainment, and the smoke was so dense that it couldn't be found again during the evening.

However, nobody missed it, as there was a general demand for beer; and the gyp happening to come in at the right moment, and to do honour to the occasion, as every man in the kitchen, from the cook to the scullion, was justly proud of the glory reflected upon Trinity by Herbert's successes, Audit ale was forthcoming.

It is not many entertainments that are graced by the presence of Audit ale, that special tap that is reserved for the delectation of Fellows on occasions when they happen to deserve well of their college. The members of the C.U.A.C who were curled up on the floor of Herbert's attic, knew well the strength of this generous brew; but their hospitable host imbibed it for the first time in his University career with remarkable results.

The familiar beams of his ceiling were found at unusual elevations, and in quite unaccustomed places, whenever he made a circular attempt to go across the room. He could go straight enough at other times to reach the window at a right angle, but under the influence of the Audit ale everything had acquired a habit of going round, and the only way to arrive at a given point was by certain rotary motions of the body, and these invariably brought incidental prominences of feature into collision with the beams.

There was a great deal of athletic talk, and Herbert had a bazy recollection of being entered for all sorts of events, and joining a dozen clubs, and promising the cox of the Trinity boat to train for the May races. In fact, he did not at all know what he had let himself in for, and when the company dispersed and volunteered to return the borrowed furniture to its various owners on their way, Herbert presently found all his own belongings carried off *en masse*, and when his matutinal bedmaker turned up a few hours later, the debris on the stairs and the confusion of chairs on the landings suggested to her intelligent mind the idea of 'fire,' and forthwith she gave the alarm, and brought all the men on the staircase out in a state of demi-toilet, and a crowd of college servants armed with buckets of water, to find Herbert asleep on the floor of his keeping-room in the midst of his shamed and outraged household gods.

The recording angel has a busy time at Cambridge ; let us hope the sponge is used with a liberal hand !

Herbert didn't appear at chapel that morning, nor for several mornings, and he blushed quite guiltily when he met the clear eyes of the Trinity Lily looking at him over the hymns with a grave reproach in their calm depths. It was a strange influence, and he couldn't at all account for it, that this pale-faced girl exercised over him. After he had spent an evening at the Bellenden's he could not write to the little mother for a whole week ; but the sight of the Trinity Lily at her artless prayers always sent him back to the rooms with a sudden desire to sit down and write one of his tender, boyish letters, that would brighten the widow's lonely hours in that poor home in the little white town of Bideford.

A very strange event happened at the end of the term, that had the effect of deepening this influence in a very marked manner.

The post brought Herbert one morning, together with a letter in that dear familiar hand, a little pink note in an unfamiliar but charming caligraphy, with a faintly suggestive odour of some subtle perfume. He turned the letter over and smelt it, and examined the postmark, and finally opened it. Most men would have opened it first, but Herbert had never received a dainty pink-tinted note before.

It was only a few lines from the Misses Bellenden, requesting the pleasure of his company at a small evening party the following night.

The foolish boy left his breakfast untasted, and the Bideford letter unopened, and burst in upon Geraint, who at that moment was splashing about with terrific energy in his bath.

In response to Herbert's 'Hullo !' he came in presently arrayed in a wonderful dressing-gown, looking like a tropical bird of gorgeous plumage. The poor sizar surveyed him in speechless admiration. He had no dressing-gown himself, and shivered directly from his bath into his clothes, without any luxurious intermediate stage.

He exhibited his letter to Geraint with a pardonable exultation, for among the pile of morning letters that were awaiting him unopened on his table there was no dainty pink, scented missive.

Geraint's handsome face flushed as he recognised the pretty, irregular handwriting.

'By Jove !' he said, taking it eagerly from Herbert, 'it's Hebe's writing ! What the deuce does she mean by writing to you ? The other always does the invitations.'

'And you ?' said Herbert, glancing quite unintentionally on the little heap of letters the other was turning over on the table.

'Oh, they never ask me,' he said, with a low laugh, that was just a trifle bitter for such frank lips. 'I've a standing invitation. Yes ; I shall go.'

He sighed involuntarily as he spoke, and his open brow clouded,

and a little spasm that was almost pain crossed his face for a moment, for his eye had fallen upon another letter that lay unopened upon his table—a letter that had nothing dainty or suggestive about it, written on the best of paper, in the best of ink, in a large firm aristocratic female hand.

Geraint tossed Hebe Bellenden's pink note impatiently across the table to Herbert, as if it hurt him somehow to see it lie—even for a moment—in juxtaposition with this. Herbert remembered the incident long after, when the bold, significant characters of that aristocratic hand were strangely familiar to him.

'You will go, Flowers, I suppose? You haven't been there since that first night, when a shooting-star fell in our path under Magdalene Bridge. Do you remember it? Was it prophetic?'

He was turning over that letter beside his plate in an absent, preoccupied way; but he made no attempt to open it.

'Yes,' said Herbert with a laugh, 'I remember it very well; it was prophetic; it was an omen to me that I should be "gated." I shall certainly go. It's so near the end of term now that I can't be "gated" for more than a week.'

When the night arrived, Herbert dazzled the eyes of Brown—who had come into his room for a smoke after Hall—by the vision of his new shiny dress-suit, his cambric shirt-front, and his gold stud, all of which articles were perfectly new—and unpaid for.

He had grown reckless lately, since he had received that invitation from the Bellendens. In adding a dress-suit to his wardrobe he had made other indispensable and costly additions to it, the last item being a gold stud.

That evening, when Herbert came into the Chesterton drawing-room, both the sisters Bellenden rose to receive him. They were so delighted to see him, and greeted him so kindly, that the modest undergraduate blushed, and did not remember for the rest of the evening that that wretched dress-suit wasn't paid for.

'We saw you take that dreadful jump, Mr. Flowers,' said Hebe Bellenden, in her low, rich voice, that Herbert thought was the sweetest music he had ever heard. 'I knew you were going to win; I bet a dozen pairs of gloves on you.'

'And won them, I hope?' said Herbert gallantly.

'And won them! I should never have forgiven you if I had lost.' And she flashed upon him a smile out of her dangerous dark eyes.

'Are you so unforgiving?' he said, for want of something better to say.

'You had better not try me,' she murmured, with a little shrug of her lovely shoulders. 'I never forgive and I never forget. I have never forgotten that I won your sovereign, and that you were "gated" for a whole term on my account. You must have your revenge by-and-by.'

And after this she introduced him to a Girton girl in a bewitching Liberty frock, who had also been a spectator of the C.U.A.C. Sports,

and who relaxed the severity of her normal attitude towards undergraduates, and condescended to ask him how long he had been training.

He answered so modestly that the superior creature told him, quite confidentially, that they did a little jumping at Girton; that she herself had tried the high jump, but had never been able to clear anything over four feet six.

'Your petticoats get in the way, I suppose,' said Herbert modestly, and blushed dreadfully at the sound of his voice—for the song, which somebody was singing, came suddenly to an end, and caused his words to be heard distinctly all over the room.

The lady gave him a scornful look that ought to have annihilated him.

'We don't wear petticoats,' she said coldly.

'Oh!' said Herbert, blushing deeper than ever.

'I mean, of course,' explained the sweet girl-graduate, 'that we wear a proper dress for athletics; we shall wear it, doubtless, altogether by-and-by, when people understand these things better. It would be quite impossible to play football in skirts!'

'Quite!' Herbert gasped feebly. He was conjuring up an awful vision of the Trinity Lily playing football in a divided skirt, and the profanity of the idea made him blush dreadfully.

It was quite a relief to him when Miss Bellenden came and carried off the Amazon to the piano. She sang a French song, a very sparkling, brilliant affair, which he didn't understand a bit, and which nobody listened to and everybody praised.

Conversation of a sentimental sort was carried on quite audibly, with delightful disregard to the singing; and when the songs were ended everyone was so charmed, and some people begged to have 'just the last verse over again!'

The rooms were quite full, and were perfectly lighted. There were wax-lights on the mantelpiece, and on quaint sconces all over the rooms. They lighted up Hebe Bellenden's figure to perfection, as she sat beneath them on a crimson velvet couch that only made the white velvet of her dazzling complexion whiter by contrast. She wore a creamy gown of some soft, clinging texture, that showed her figure to perfection; and on her white arms, and round her white throat, gleamed some blood-red gems that might have been rubies; her hair hung loose, in rich waves of dead gold, over her velvety shoulders; and the prettiest foot in the world, in the daintiest satin shoe that Pinet ever made, gleamed out beneath the soft folds of her dress. They lighted, too, the crowd of foolish undergraduates who hung round her—simple, innocent fellows whose honest admiration was all too visible on their ingenuous, beardless faces. How they listened when she sang, every sweet note thrilling through their soft hearts! How willing and eager they were to burn themselves in the light of this brilliant, dangerous beauty!

Herbert was as bad as any of them. She was an unearthly being

in his innocent eyes, superior to all his other loves—to Muriel Spurway, to Julie—to the Trinity Lily? No, he declined to draw any comparison here; he separated her in his mind, as Geraint had separated the two letters on his breakfast-table, from the pale-faced girl who sat beneath the organ-loft at Trinity.

The Girton girls left quite early, and Herbert helped to shawl them in the hall, and led the Amazon gravely to her carriage. She tapped him on the arm with her fan, as he was taking leave of her at the door.

'Don't lose your heart to Hebe Bellenden,' she said archly; 'nor your money,' she added in a lower voice, as the carriage drove away, and the simple fellow went blushing guiltily up the steps.

The warning came too late. If the foolish undergraduate did not exactly wear his heart pinned to the sleeve of his new dress-coat, he had it conveniently at hand, ready for exchange at any moment. Fortunately for him, Hebe Bellenden had more pressing business on hand, and too many hearts already at her feet—hearts and purses.

Grinley had come in late, when the girl-graduates drove away, and he and Miss Bellenden were already busy arranging the little tables for cards.

Herbert looked into the room as he passed the door, but he did not go in. It was nearly empty, he saw, as most of the men had gone into the coffee room beyond for refreshments; but he saw Geraint talking to Hebe at the further end of the room. Her face was turned away from him, and he saw that Geraint's fresh-coloured face was unusually pale, and that he was bending over the lovely, drooping golden head with a tenderness that was unmistakable.

Herbert saw that he was *de trop*, and followed the other guests into the coffee-room. There was a continual popping of champagne corks, and some of the men were drinking freely. He noticed one man in particular, who had been hanging round Hebe Bellenden all the evening; a low-browed, swarthy fellow, with a heavy sulky manner, who had followed her about with a sort of dogged perseverance, bending over her at the piano to turn the pages of her music, and leading her back to her seat in a kind of sulky triumph. He was drinking deeply now, glass after glass of bubbling champagne, till his little beady black eyes gleamed with a strange fire, and there was a dusky flush creeping up beneath his sallow skin.

When the men came back to the drawing-room, where the ladies were, he seated himself at a little table opposite Hebe Bellenden. Herbert fancied, as he watched her with his foolish jealous eyes, that she turned slightly pale beneath that pretty permanent colour on her cheeks, but her lips were smiling upon him. Geraint was beside her still, and Herbert would have taken the only vacant chair at the table, but she stopped him with a look that flashed out upon him like a warning.

'Not now, Mr. Flowers,' she said gaily; 'not now. You shall have your revenge presently.'

Fortune at first was all on the side of Hebe's black-browed admirer. He won repeatedly, and Hebe lost with that charming, indolent indifference which placed her high above most women, who cannot lose money without losing their tempers.

In his sulky triumph the swarthy undergraduate became downright intolerable.

'I am in luck to-night,' he remarked with a chuckle, his little red eyes leering across the table at Hebe.

'You are in great luck !' she answered, with a little low laugh that somehow made Herbert, who was looking on, feel uncomfortable, as if cold water were running down his spine. 'Your star is in the ascendant.'

'Is it so?' he said. There was more in his voice—his thick, unsteady voice—than in his words.

The girl took his meaning, for a warm, rosy flush stole over her white bosom, and her full throat, and her lovely face, and her hand trembled as she threw out the next card—and lost.

'Oh !' said a man at the table, 'this is too bad ; you have been losing all the evening, Miss Bellenden.'

'Never mind,' said the fellow with a scowl ; 'that's her business, not yours. We'll double the stakes.'

He threw again and won. He was quite wild with elation ; but the girl's face was scornfully indifferent. The stakes were again doubled : her hand did not tremble now, and she played with the same languid indifference—and lost.

The fellow laughed a hideous little chuckle that showed all his discoloured, uneven teeth, and pocketing his winnings, lounged into the adjoining room to get some more champagne.

While he was gone the other men crowded round Hebe with their honest regrets and exhortations, and begged her to play no more ; and her sister, who was quite the other end of the room, flashed a rapid glance at her across the tables.

'The fellow's got the devil's luck,' Geraint said bitterly. 'You've lost quite enough, Hebe ; don't play any more.'

Hebe's dark eyes shot out a gleam of scornful humour.

'We shall see if he has had enough,' she said, smiling.

He came back flushed and heated with wine, and took his seat at the table.

'We'll double the stakes again,' he said thickly, and laid a roll of notes on the table.

Hebe looked over to her sister, but Geraint laid a thick bundle of delightfully new crisp notes on the table by her side. She smiled and nodded her thanks, and took them quietly up, selecting several out of the heap, which she staked with perfect coolness and indifference.

The man looked across the table at Geraint, and Herbert saw a scowl gathering over his heavy brow. His cheeks had an angry flush, and his hands trembled as he threw out the cards.

The luck had turned against him, and he lost. He played again, recklessly, doubling the stakes, and again he lost, and a murmur went round the table.

'I think you have lost enough for one night,' said a man behind him, laying a heavy hand on his shoulder.

It was Grinley who spoke; he had left his own table, and had come over to see what was going on here. He was looking at Hebe as he spoke, and not at the man, and Herbert intercepted a meaning glance that passed between them.

'I wouldn't play any more to-night if I were you,' he said, good-naturedly.

The man by this time was too excited to take advice.

'If Miss Hebe is not tired, I'm not,' he answered doggedly.

Hebe laughed her low velvety laugh, that made Herbert feel so uncomfortable in the region of his spine, and took up the cards.

'Just for this once,' he said, and doubled the stakes again. There was quite a little crowd round the table, and Grinley was still behind his chair.

He played with strange, fierce eagerness, looking up once only with a swift, hungry suspicion in his beady black eyes, and saw—Well, whatever he saw, it was too late! he had lost.

He rose up from the table muttering an oath, and Hebe rose up at the same moment.

A change had come suddenly over her calm, indifferent face. It had grown in a moment quite white beneath the two hectic spots on her cheeks, and her scarlet lips parted with a curious expression of suddenness and flutter as she made her way hurriedly out of the room.

Her dress brushed by Herbert, leaving behind it the fragrance of the most delightful scent in the world.

The little man was blustering at the table, and Grinley had his hand on his shoulder. His face was livid and wet with perspiration, but his small black eyes had a glare in them that was almost demoniacal.

'I tell you she did!' he was saying thickly, and even as he spoke he had to steady himself by the chair. 'I swear it!'

Geraint took off the attention from the ill-mannered fellow, who had not mastery sufficient over himself to lose gracefully, by taking Hebe Bellenden's place and calling upon Herbert to take the vacant chair.

Herbert heard the man muttering to himself as Grinley got him quietly out of the room: but he noticed that he shambled in his walk, and stumbled against the chairs and the jambs of the door like a drunken man.

The door was closed upon him now, and the men continued their game as if such little scenes were not unusual in *La Maison Bellenden*.

Presently, looking up, Herbert noticed that Miss Bellenden's

place was vacant, and the lights were burning low, and all the glow and brightness of the scene had departed.

He rose up to go, too, when the game was over, and went out alone into the hall to find his cap and gown.

As he lifted the heavy hangings to make his formal adieux to his hostess, Hebe Bellenden stood before him.

Her face was perfectly colourless, except for those awful rouge-spots on her cheek, which only made her look more ghastly in the lamplight. She put her finger to her lip with a sudden gesture of caution, and drew Herbert silently into a little conservatory beyond.

The place was damp and half lighted, and there was a suggestive smell of moist fresh earth. She closed the door upon them, and stood looking at Herbert with a gravity and steadfastness, and yet withal, with such an overpowering terror in her lovely eyes, that an indefinable sensation crept shyly up in the region of his spine.

'I am going to trust you, Mr. Flowers,' she said presently in a low voice, that she tried in vain to steady. 'An awful thing has happened,' and she shuddered and turned away her head. 'I want you to help me; but if you cannot, I want you to promise you will not betray me!'

Her soft white hand was on his arm, and her warm breath on his cheek, and the fragrance of the rose in her bosom overpowered all his judgment and caution as she bent over him with those tender pleading eyes.

'Betray you?' he said hotly; 'of course I will not betray you!'

'No,' she said sadly; 'you would not except—except——'

'Except nothing!' he interrupted eagerly.

'Will you swear it?' she asked with a certain kindling in her eyes, and in the dilation of the little sensitive nostril.

'I will swear it!' he answered solemnly.

Her bosom heaved as if with a sudden relief, and the corners of her tightly drawn mouth trembled.

'Wait here a minute,' she said, and left him standing in the moist, dusky place with that awfully suggestive smell of damp earth, like an open grave about him.

She was not gone a minute, and she came back with a book in her hand, a purple-covered, daintily bound little book, that bore no evidence of frequent use.

'Swear on that!' she said.

'I swear that I will never betray you!' said Herbert solemnly, and he kissed the book.

'Now,' she said, and her manner changed completely into one of command, 'come this way; speak softly, and do not be surprised at anything.'

She led him out of the conservatory into a room on the same floor, on the other side of the hall, and closed the door upon him when he entered,

There were two people already in the room standing by the table, upon which was a shaded lamp—the elder Miss Bellenden and Grinley. They both turned quickly round when Herbert entered, and Grinley came forward.

‘Do you know what you are doing, Hebe?’ he exclaimed roughly.

‘Yes,’ she answered coldly, almost haughtily, Herbert thought; ‘I have brought in a *friend*’—emphasizing the word and speaking slowly—‘that you can trust—who will do all that you need.’

‘Have you told him?’ asked the elder Miss Bellenden significantly, not looking at Herbert, but at her sister, with an unspoken question in her fine eyes.

‘I have told him nothing!’ said the girl, wearily sinking into a chair, and putting her hand up with a sudden involuntary movement before her eyes, as if to shut out some dreadful sight. ‘You must explain what you think necessary. I will answer for him.’

The elder Miss Bellenden was about to speak; she began nervously, wringing her white, shapely hands:

‘A very unhappy thing has happened,’ she murmured, but Grinley interrupted her.

‘The fact is, Flowers,’ he said, taking Herbert a little aside from the ladies, and speaking in a low, confidential voice, ‘a deuced awkward thing has happened, unfortunately for the ladies, here in this house. A man suffering from heart disease comes here, takes advantage of Miss Bellenden’s hospitality, and drinks more champagne than is good for him; insists, as you saw, upon playing for high stakes, grows reckless and loses heavily; works himself up into a state of excitement, dangerous to anyone with a weak heart—you saw him stumbling about in the room—has an attack of faintness, sudden collapse follows, and he dies right off!’

Grinley’s eyes were watching Herbert with a furtive, anxious expression as he spoke, though his tone was calm and collected.

‘And he,’ said Herbert with a gasp, ‘is—is he dead?’

‘Yes, dead! Nothing could be done for him; he was gone in a moment. The worst of it is its happening here. It would be so awkward for the ladies if it were to get about.’

‘Very awkward!’ Herbert feebly assented, though his mind was busy picturing those awful last moments of the poor wretch who had so lately been playing by his side.

‘We must think of the ladies, Flowers,’ continued Grinley, glancing over to where Hebe sat, with her hand still upraised before her stricken face. ‘You must help me to protect them against the scandal that this affair, if it becomes known, would create.’

‘Yes,’ said Herbert mechanically, ‘we must think of the ladies;’ and his mind was still groping its way after the man who had stumbled against the doorway, and passed out of the brilliantly lighted room into darkness—and death.

‘The first thing to be done is to get rid of the body,’ Grinley

continued, still eyeing Herbert with that furtive, questioning look. 'It will be very simple. We have only to take him back to his college as—as if he were drunk and incapable, as many fellows are about the end of term, just before they go down. We can take him in between us and carry him up to his room, and—and leave him there.'

Herbert looked up for the first time with intelligent eyes.

'You want me,' he said, speaking slowly, and with a tremor in his voice that he could not control, 'to help you remove the body?'

'Exactly! We can take it between us in a cab, and nobody need be any the wiser. It is impossible for it to remain here; if there are any questions to be asked they must be asked there,' and he pointed in the direction of Cambridge. 'Consider the ladies!'

'Yes,' Herbert said slowly—he could not collect himself sufficiently to think clearly; 'but how about those?'

A sound of laughter and voices came from the coffee-room beyond, and seemed to recall the presence of their guests to the minds of the sisters.

'You *must* go, Hebe,' said the elder Miss Bellenden; 'you must keep them amused till—till——' and she glanced fearfully across the room to a couch which the lamp effectually shaded.

Hebe Bellenden rose to go, but her limbs trembled under her, and she caught at the table for support. Grinley poured her out some champagne in a glass that was on the table, but she put it aside with a shudder.

'No, no, not that!' she said, and she looked appealingly at Herbert.

There was a decanter with brandy on the table, and some glasses and a jug of water, and it was spilled all over the shining mahogany as if it had been poured out hurriedly.

He took up out of the rack in the open liqueur-case a clean glass, which he showed her, as her eyes silently followed him, and poured some brandy in it, filling it up with water, and came over to the stricken girl, holding it kindly, almost tenderly, to her trembling lips. The glass rattled against her teeth; but she drained all the contents with an effort, and the colour came back slowly into her cheeks.

'You must go at once, Hebe,' said Miss Bellenden in a hurried whisper. 'You must sing, child, do you hear? You must make a noise and keep them amused while—while——'

'I know,' interrupted Hebe impatiently. 'Good-bye, Mr. Flowers; I shall never forget what you have done for me to-night!'

She wrung Herbert's passive hand as she passed shudderingly out of the room, with her lovely head averted from that darkened corner.

Herbert never forgot her attitude as she passed him in her white trailing robes, like some Lady Macbeth, with the red gems

on her throat and arms gleaming in the lamplight like drops of blood.

Miss Bellenden followed her, and returned presently with an undergraduate gown and cap in her hand.

'There is no time to lose,' she whispered hurriedly; 'they will all be going presently, and there is nothing but a hansom to be had.'

With her own white hands she helped Grinley put the gown on that dark object that lay all of a heap on the couch, and drew the cap down over the pallid face. When this was done she beckoned Herbert over, and between them they bore the lifeless body of the undergraduate into the hall.

When they reached the outer hall, he and Grinley supported it alone, while she closed the inner door before opening the front door. He ever remembered in that awful moment, as he supported the heavy, ghastly burden, the sweet tender strains of '*Il Bacio*' that floated out with him and it into the wild March night.

They bore it through the silent streets of Cambridge, this ghastly, horrible burden, between them, supporting it on either side, in a silence broken save by the moaning and shrieking of the wild March wind.

At the gateway of St. John's the hansom stopped, and Grinley got out and had a whispered consultation with the porter. The man laughed and pocketed his fee, and threw open the gate, while Herbert and he carried their helpless burden through.

They bore it across the silent quad, and up the narrow twisting staircase to his rooms, where a lamp was burning and a cheerful fire was awaiting him. They laid him on his bed in his academics, with his white, drawn face turned up to the sky—for the lattice of his chamber was open—and the March wind was stirring his lank damp hair in a cruel mockery of life—and death.

Grinley walked with Herbert to the gate of Trinity, for the poor fellow stumbled and wandered like a drunken man. Grinley left him at the gate, and he stumbled across the quad like one in a dream. A voice was ringing in his ears—that was praying for him ever so many miles away—but the words were quite audible, and he repeated them mechanically, as he used to repeat them when he was an innocent child at her knee, 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil!'

He had fallen fainting, overwrought with excitement and the unwonted fatigue of that heavy, ghastly burden, at the foot of his staircase, with the innocent prayer of his childhood on his lips.

Geraint found him there hours after, when he came gaily up the staircase trilling '*Il Bacio, Il Bacio*!' in his manly tenor voice, waking up all the echoes of the silent quad.

CHAPTER VIII.

MRS. DO-AS-YOU-WOULD-BE-DONE-BY.

HERBERT did not go down for the Easter vacation. He stayed up, not so much for a commendable desire to read, as from a reluctance to go back to his native town.

He fully persuaded himself that he wanted to work ; he quite cheated himself, indeed, into that belief. It was not necessary to invent any other reason with that all-sufficient one ready at hand. It was not necessary to remind himself of that truth, that affords consolation to every great mind whose worth one's neighbours are slow to acknowledge, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

Herbert was not exactly a prophet yet, and the little world of Bideford had hitherto shown itself quite indifferent to his merits. The time had not come for walking up to the front door of the great house, and, all things considered, it was quite as well that he should stay up and read during the short vacation.

If the truth must be told, he did not care to meet the little mother so soon after that ghastly episode at Chesterton. He could not look in those clear eyes, into whose pure depths he had looked with perfect candour and confidence since his own had opened on the light of this world, and had always seen heaven there !

No, he could not meet those pure eyes with that guilty secret pressing heavily on his conscience. Mother was still the name for God and heaven to this simple, tender-hearted undergraduate. He never knelt before that great White Throne, he never approached that vast Presence Chamber, but he felt that she was with him, that the sweet influence of his childhood was around him. The secrets of his inmost heart were laid as bare before the only heaven he knew as before that distant heaven he hoped for.

The ugly little affair at St. John's had created less stir in Cambridge than would have been expected. The college authorities were very much shocked at the discovery ; but as a medical man in high repute, who had been consulted on various occasions by the unfortunate undergraduate, testified to organic disease of the heart of long standing, and was of the opinion that a fatal issue might have occurred at any moment under the pressure of exciting causes—and there were evidences of the presence of a sufficient quantity of alcohol in the system to account for any amount of excitement—there was no necessity for an inquest, and the matter was hushed up.

The University abhors a fuss, and the college authorities dislike publicity above all things ; and there were no awkward questions asked beyond those which Mr. Grinley, who stood well with the

Dean and was on very friendly terms with the Proctors, answered in his accustomed candid and straightforward manner.

But the memory of that dark night's work was seldom out of Herbert's mind during those first dreary days of the short vacation. Nearly all the men of his college had gone down, Geraint and Grinley among the first, and the place was dreadfully dull and deserted.

Grinley avoided him, he thought, after that night, though they met occasionally, and they spent the last evening of the term together in Geraint's rooms; but that awful subject was never once named between them.

There was a photograph of Hebe Bellenden on Geraint's mantel-piece—a charming photograph of the lovely face, with the dark, dangerous eyes faintly smiling, and that subtle charm beneath the purple-fringed lids that lured men on to ruin—and death.

There was an awful fascination for Herbert in the beautiful face that smiled down upon him as he sat at Geraint's hospitable hearth.

He used to steal in during the vacation and look at it, and once he bore it off in triumph to his own room; but he brought it back again the next morning before daybreak. He couldn't enter that audience chamber he was wont to seek before retiring to rest with that face looking down upon him, and after a restless night, haunted by evil dreams, he took the beautiful uncanny thing back, and replaced it among Geraint's *lares et penates*.

A curious accident happened to Herbert during this short vacation that altered the pattern of his life, or as much of it as lay in the shadow of the undreamed-of possibilities of the future.

A very small thing may do this: the twist of a thread, the substitution of a colour, may alter the tone and design and harmony of the whole. But the pattern would not have been complete without it. That wonderful complex pattern, woven in light and shade by unseen hands that grasp and order the great design, depends for its completeness on some trivial accident of Fate, that in our blindness we—profanely—call Chance!

Was it chance that took Herbert so often on the river during those variable spring days—that ever-changeful season of swift showers and sudden sunshine?

He was very glad to get away from his lonely rooms on that deserted staircase—for even Brown had gone down—to get away into the sweet spring rain or sunshine, from the sight of that dead face, from the memory of that ghastly burden that haunted him.

It was lonely enough, paddling through this flat, bare country. It was very different to the broad, swelling Torridge, with the green hills of Devon, fringed with fern to the water's edge, rising steeply on either side, and the blue waves of the Atlantic breaking in the distance over the bar. He used to dream of those as he paddled between the level banks with the monotonous fields

stretching flatly away until they met the horizon, and think of the little mother toiling day after day up to the great house to teach those mutinous children.

The prospect was as dreary as the contemplation of those sad, level fields, and, like them offered no break, no change, so far as the eye could reach. What could he do to lighten the burden on those tender shoulders? Other brave hearts, oppressed by a galling sense of the unequal burden that some frail shoulders are bearing, have asked the same question, and fumed and fretted, and made high resolves. The nobler natures have kept them, maybe, and returned in after-years a thousandfold the benefits bestowed by those kind, willug hunds; and the weaker—are we not all weak?—have vowed, and wept, and thanked God for the tender love, for the sacrifices that love alone can make—and by-and-by crept back, like the Prodigal, to the ruined hearth, to find that even repentance may come too late!

Oh, the agony and the shame of that discovery!

Herbert would groan aloud in these fits of contrition and remorse—the memory of those accumulating bills was pressing heavily upon him—and build up all sorts of castles in the air. They were to be raised and paid for by work, and success—always by success—and the little mother was to inhabit them.

If Hebe Bellenden were there, she was in an apartment far away from that pure presence—in another castle, maybe, for he was very fond of building castles in those sweet spring days, when the sap was rising in every bough, and the lark was singing overhead. He used to dream these hopeful dreams as he paddled about on the sluggish Cam, as it wound through the 'Backs,' with the gray walls of the colleges frowning down upon him, and the willows on the banks whispering the secrets that had been confided to them by undergraduates in terms long ago. The air was full of high hopes, and ambitions, and emulations. A great storied past looked down from the old lichen-covered walls; a dim, shadowy future stretched before him, broken by battlements and pinnacles that all pointed the way to distinction and fame.

Perhaps it was these venerable walls, fringing the blue sky with their turrets and battlements, that stimulated his castle-building—there was so much material here. But the baseless fabrics had an unhappy habit of collapsing, and tumbling down among the shadows in the dark waters beneath, and the present, with its leanness and poverty, would mock his boyish dreams.

At such moments he would groan aloud, and, in that foolish, impatient way of his, would send his canoe flying off down the stream with an impetus that would be likely to render it unpleasant to any boat that happened to come in its way. He was disporting himself one day in this reckless fashion, when a tub-dingey with some ladies in it came round a corner.

He had calculated to shoot by quietly, but the tub, owing to the

lady who was steering pulling the wrong string, veered suddenly round right across the river. The canoe had no alternative but to go into it, and the tub reeled under the shock, and with a sudden flashing of oars the canoe turned upside down, and Herbert found himself floundering in the river.

He went down under the tub, and, whether in going down or coming up, he got another bump—this time upon his head.

He was never quite sure how he did come up: it seemed to him in that interval under water, when all sorts of long-forgotten things came suddenly up before him, as if memory had turned the key of all her secret closets, and the forgotten past came trooping out; it seemed, indeed, in that strange interval, that it was scarcely worth while to come up again.

However, he thought better of it, and came up in a sad mess and with a great deal of the slime and sediment of the Cam sticking to him.

He had not the slightest recollection of how he got ashore, unless somebody dragged him and hauled him up upon the bank.

There was somebody, certainly, a very long way off, saying in a very distressed voice:

‘Oh dear, what shall we do? He is one of our men, and we have nearly killed him! Oh, Fräulein, what shall we do?’

The voice was very nice, and there was quite an agony of tears in it.

‘I should leave him on ze bank until he feel better, and zen he vill row back, and ze exercise vill do him much goot.’

It was a very unmusical voice this, with a strong German accent.

‘Oh, Fräulein, how cruel!’ The speaker was nearer now, and somebody’s warm breath was on his cheek. ‘I’m sure if you will help we can get him into the boat, and we will row him back.’

‘You will do nozing of ze kind, mees. A nasty wet man in ze boat; faugh! we shall all get von cold.’

Herbert thought it was about time to open his eyes, and he did so, one at a time. The sight was not reassuring.

A hard-faced, stolid-looking German woman was poking him with her umbrella. He discreetly closed them again, until a delightful voice, quite close to him now, cried:

‘See, Fräulein, he has opened his eyes! he is coming to!’

Herbert came to with a bound, and, opening his eyes in the direction of the voice, encountered a little frightened face quite close to his.

The face drew back hurriedly, and Herbert essayed to rise upon his elbow, while the sky and the river, and the flat-lying fields, were performing all sorts of gyrations in their suddenly developed propensity for shifting their relative positions.

‘Oh, I am so glad you are better!’

The sky was on top now, and the fields were subsiding, and Herbert thought he had seen the face before.

'Yes,' he said, or tried to say; 'I am better, thank you;' but his voice was so faint and far-off that he took it for somebody else's.

'Oh, I am so glad; I thought we had killed you!'

There were tears in the girl's eyes, Herbert could see, in spite of the water in his own.

'It was my fault,' he whispered in his faint, far-off voice; 'I fouled you.'

As he spoke there was the sound of a regular splash of cars on the water, coming swiftly down the stream, and a four-oared boat came in sight.

Somebody hailed them, and the men in the boat came ashore.

It was a very ignoble position for a member of the C.U.A.C., stretched very awkwardly upon the river bank, and making a dreadful mess, and being poked at by a fat German woman with an umbrella.

The harsh, guttural voice tried to explain matters; but the girl cut her short with her delightful, incoherent account of the accident.

'It was all our fault; we pulled the wrong string and got across the river, and the canoe ran against us and upset, and—and—I'm afraid I knocked him on the head with the oar. It was all done in a minute. I thought he would *never* come up again! I don't know how we got him ashore—and—and——,' here the speaker subsided into a hysterical flood of tears, and the men hauled Herbert into the tub and rowed him back to his college.

Herbert awoke next morning with the sound of the swift spring shower pattering on the roof, and gurgling in the familiar lead gutters beneath his window. The sound seemed very far away, and the familiar gurglings and chokings in the water-spout were more like soft, liquid inarticulate whisperings. He had not quite awakened to consciousness, and with the sound of the pattering rain came a strange sense of ripples breaking overhead, and the waters closing softly over him.

He lost all count of time as he lay thus, only hearing unmeaning voices speaking to him from afar. It seemed quite ridiculous to him lying there, leagues under water, with the ripples breaking above him, to be asked by his bed-maker what he would take for breakfast.

The blow on the head was a more serious affair than was at first anticipated; whether from the oar which the girl had used with frantic haste to turn the course of the boat, or with coming in collision with the tub, it did not much matter. It had been sufficiently serious to cause a slight concussion, and Herbert took several days to rally from the shock.

The Master of Trinity came over to see him several times as he lay in this state, and sent his own doctor, and engaged a nurse

from Addenbroke's to look after him. It had happened to be the Master's niece and her German governess who were out in the tub on that unlucky day, and the innocent cause of all this trouble was breaking her tender heart, and reproaching herself for being the poor sizar's murderer.

It was not quite so bad as that, as Herbert awoke to fuller consciousness on the third day after the accident and beheld a beautiful creature in a white apron, and a white cap, and a white collar, and with grave face and serious eyes, watching him.

He didn't speak, for he was afraid she would vanish; and as he watched her, and tried to raise his head from the pillow, the prodigal rain made a wilder noise outside, and there was a rushing in his ears as if the unpleasant waters of the Cam were again closing over him, and he fell back helplessly on the pillow.

The beautiful creature did not vanish; she came over and stood beside him, and laid a delightfully cool hand on his hot head, and told him not to attempt to get up.

He framed some idiotic question which must have sounded utterly ridiculous in sane ears; but 'Water Babies' had been running in his mind so long, with a vague impression that he was one himself, that he murmured with a fatuous smile of recognition:

'Mrs. Do-as-you-would-be-done-by?'

It took him a long time to say it, as the syllables wouldn't fall into their places. The lovely creature, who was 'neither gnarly, nor horny, nor scaly, nor prickly, but smooth and soft, and pussy, and cuddly, and as delicious a creature as ever nursed a baby,' looked down at him with her kind eyes, and answered softly but very irrelevantly:

'You are much better, and I am the nurse.'

This was clearly a specious falsehood, and Tom, otherwise Herbert, who knew she was the other, looked back at her with reproachful eyes.

It was quite ridiculous saying she was the nurse; how could a nurse live under water, with the wavelets rippling overhead, and not a tuck in her apron or a frill on her cap was wet?

He asked himself the question as he lay looking at her in the spring sunshine, in that semi-conscious awakening that was less slumber than a long dream of inarticulate whisperings. She was still there when he opened his eyes again, when the sun had set and the evening shadows were deepening in the room.

He was quite certain of her identity now, as she sat watching him in the fading light; and when the moon arose he saw that she had 'two great armfuls of balics—nine hundred' under one arm and thirteen hundred under the other—and he wished she would throw them all into the water, and take him in her arms and hush him to sleep!

He fell asleep whilst he was wishing it, and when he awoke she was sitting there still.

'Don't go away!' he said. His voice was not so far away now, and the rain had stopped.

'No,' she said, smiling. 'I'm not going away.'

'Not ever?'

'Oh yes, some day; when you are better.'

'When he was better?' He asked himself what that could mean, with a strange wonder. The answer did not come directly, and when it did come all the scene of yesterday's disaster rushed tumultuously into his mind.

The shame of it overpowered him. He remembered all at once quite well how he—a member of the C.U.A.C.—had been upset by a girl, and hauled ashore by an old woman with an umbrella!

He groaned aloud. It would be the talk of the 'Varsity.

'Who brought me back yesterday?' he asked.

'Yesterday?' she repeated, laying a soothing hand on his head; 'why it happened a week ago!'

Herbert got round rapidly after this, and the beautiful creature whom Herbert persisted in calling Mrs. Do-as-you-would-be-done-by stayed with him until he was quite well again.

The master came over to see him several times, which was a mark of attention. Long as he had presided over the college, he had never been so high up that staircase before. He was very wary about the beams, and inspected the condition of the gutters, poking and prying about Herbert's keeping-room in a way that a Master of a college is privileged to do.

He came across those Latin hexameters in the course of his investigation, and read them with mild interest. He met with the old coach's silver inkstand, too, and read the inscription with a thoughtful, softening smile of recognition. It carried him back to his own youth, to those bright early days of promise—splendidly fulfilled—when the former owner had coached him for his Tripos.

He was a man of imposing presence, as a Master should be, with a broad, nebulous forehead, and keen, searching gray eyes, that flashed out, beneath his bushy eyebrows to the extreme terror of undergraduates; but he was not at all a terrible person as he sat by Herbert's bedside, and talked to him of those early days when the old coach was his tutor.

When a college Don unbends from that awful majesty which strikes terror into the conscience-stricken undergraduate mind, there is no man in the world more delightfully urbane and gracious. A great mind never does things by halves.

Dr. Howell not only visited Herbert in his attic, but he invited him to visit Mrs. Howell at the Lodge, and receive his little niece's regrets and apologies for the mischief she had unwittingly caused.

It was some weeks before he could get across the quad and present himself in Mrs. Howell's drawing-room, but every day brought gentle mementoes from the Lodge of the thoughtful kindness of its gracious mistress—flowers from the Master's

garden to brighten up his bare room, dainties from the Lodge kitchen to tempt his appetite.

Herbert knew whose hands had picked those pale, sweet spring flowers, so like herself, and quite trembled at the thought of that meeting that awaited him.

Lucy had been informed by Mrs. Howell's own kind hand of her boy's accident, and day by day she had received accounts from the same source of his progress towards recovery. The Master himself had written once to his old coach's daughter, and assured her of Herbert's having all the care and attention that she herself could give him.

There was quite a bundle of home letters for Herbert when he was able to read them, all brimming over with that genuine tender love which is the best, surely the best, though least valued, maybe, of our temporary possessions here.

The tears were in the boy's eyes as he read these gentle effusions, and when he had finished them he buried his face in the bedclothes, and thanked God humbly for this tender love that was spared him.

How he would work and strive in the future to be worthy of it ! And then, of course, came a good deal more castle-building.

Though every cloud-capt tower and gorgeous palace of our youthful dreams should perish, and, like other baseless fabrics, leave not a wrack behind to cheer us in our age, yet who would not have been a castle-builder ? How real they were, how solid and deep the foundations, how thick the walls, how lofty the towers ! Well, if we are old and wise, we have done with castle-building now ; other dreams have come and gone since then ; the seasons have budded, and the harvest of our lives has been reaped ; the smiling face of Hope has ceased to smile upon us, the gladness of those early days has faded ; but still, in dreams, we see them like some Palace Beautiful, with shining battlements and cloud-capt towers. Maybe, upon another shore, defying time and fate, we shall greet them—one of the glad surprises that await us there these unfulfilled dreams of our youth.

When the dreamer was quite recovered of his accident, he went tremblingly across the great court of Trinity to the Lodge by the Master's invitation, to pay his respects to Mrs. Howell and her niece.

Herbert's visit to a great house before had been by way of the back stairs. He had often in these visits to Bratton Court, when the doors happened to be open, caught fearful and awesome glimpses of the magnificence of the reception rooms, and the gloomy glory of the wide staircase—not the back one he crept humbly up—with the family portraits of the Spurways looking down from the walls, and suits of armour standing sentinel in the corners ; but he had never before entered, by the front door, so stately a house as the Lodge of Trinity. Yet the fine oak-panelled hall and the noble staircase did not fill him with awe. There were

no Wardour-Street portraits on the walls, no bogies in armour in the corners ; there was nothing to terrify him, or humiliate him, or make him feel uncomfortable. The air of the place was refined and elevating, and, above all things, genuine and free from pretence. The faces on the walls, as he climbed the wide oaken stairs, looked kindly down upon him from their simple frames.

They were only engravings or etchings of notable scholars or divines, and there was a tender freemasonry in the welcoming glance which they gave the humble scholar across the years.

The same simplicity prevailed in the great drawing-room beyond, that looks out on the old gateway of Trinity. But Herbert had no eyes for the noble proportions of Mrs. Howell's drawing room, or for the stately, old-fashioned furniture that so well became it ; for the blue Worcester vases on the high mantelpiece, or for the fine portrait of the Master, which the Fellows of Trinity had just presented to Mrs. Howell, and which stood, in a rich carved frame, on an easel in the middle of the room.

The blushing undergraduate had eyes for none of these—he had seen the original of the picture before to-day—he only saw a drooping figure and a fair face, that grew suddenly warm on his entrance, and the kind, gracious figure of the Master's wife.

'My niece has been waiting so long for an opportunity of expressing her regret at being the cause of your unlucky accident, Mr. Flowers,' the lady began, introducing the shrinking girl by her side to the modest scholar.

Herbert never heard the end of the sentence, for the lovely culprit had given him a little warm hand, and was pouring out her tremulous, incoherent regrets.

Her eyes were so bright that they seemed made for laughter, and so liquid that they melted imperceptibly into tears. She was smiling upon him one moment ; she was weeping the next.

'Oh, I am so glad !—I am so sorry !' she sobbed in a delightful inconsequent way that set the foolish undergraduate in a flutter.

Of course he hastened to assure her that 'it didn't at all matter, and that he rather liked it than otherwise,' and other idiotic remarks worthy of a scholar of Trinity.

The gracious mistress of the Lodge led the awkward, shame-faced fellow on to talk of his mother, and on this subject he was awkward and shame-faced no longer. He poured out into those kind ears the story of Lucy's denials and sacrifices—the sweet, sad story of her gentle life. He waxed quite eloquent on this tender theme ; there never had been such love ; there never could be more willing sacrifices. And the women listened to him with ready sympathy. The pale cheeks of the white Trinity Lily grew warm, and her gray eyes grew moist as Lucy's boy told unreservedly the simple story of Lucy's trials, and of the brave spirit that had borne her uncomplainingly through them all. There was no need of reservation here. There was no shame in poverty so nobly borne,

and in the light of those clear eyes the poor sizar forgot all the mortifications, the daily, hourly humiliations of his lot.

It happened, strangely enough, that the Master's wife knew Lady Millicent Spurway quite well; they had been friends in youth, schoolfellows, and more than once she had been a guest at the great house by the Torridge. She knew and loved—as who does not?—the little white town of Bideford, and knew every step of the way up that steep path through the pines that Lucy had to climb to her daily toil.

The pompous, kindly Master came in while Herbert was there; he left his awful majesty with his rustling silk gown, outside, and only brought his genial kindness into Mrs. Howell's drawing-room.

He pointed out to Herbert, from the window, the rooms his old tutor once occupied, and when he learned that the boy had brought the old coach's musty old library with him to Trinity, he promised to go over to Herbert's rooms and renew his acquaintance with those old friends of his youth.

In this simple conversation the poor scholar's first hour at the Lodge passed away.

'How lovely she is, and how tender!' thought Herbert, as he crossed the great court in the spring sunshine to his lonely rooms. 'How the tears came into her eyes when I told her about the little mother, and how well they became her! Most women's eyes get red and dreadful, but tears only make her lovelier than before!'

It was not the first pair of bright eyes that the impressionable undergraduate had fallen down and worshipped; it was not the first divinity he had raved about. He was fond of creating divinities; he had arrived at that delicious period when every goose was a swan, at least, and every lass a queen.

He had raved in turn about Muriel Spurway, and even that incorrigible little flirt Julie had kept him awake of nights, and Hebe Bellenden had cost him countless heart-burnings; but to none of these had he ever confided that sweet, sad story of the little mother.

The Master was as good as his word, and came over to Herbert's attic to look through the old coach's books.

He took down one, and with a trembling hand turned the old musty pages. It was scribbled all over with marginal notes, and the leaves were yellow and discoloured by time; but what a thrill the sight of that well-remembered writing, of those familiar pages, gave him after the lapse of half a century! A mist came before the eyes of the pompous old college Don, and for a moment he was nineteen again. The past had risen up suddenly before him, and the friends of his youth were once more around him—the passions, the friendships, the dreams, and ambitions of those early days. They all came back to him, stirred from their peaceful Hades by the sight of that old familiar page,

The great scholar closed the book with a sigh, and the friends of his youth melted away again into shadows.

Was he the same man? he asked himself, as he crossed the great court to the Lodge—he used to cross it once to some poor rooms very high up—that thumbed that musty old book in the years that were past? Where were the friends whose eager faces these pages had recalled, the young voices, the brave, manly hearts that beat so high in those old days? Alas! Fate had darkly interposed: the young voices were silent or strange, and the hands grasped across the years in the generous grasp of youthful friendship were cold, and the familiar names were only a dim legend in the courts they once trod.

CHAPTER IX.

WILD OATS.

‘When within my veins the blood ran, and the curls were on my brow,
I did, O ye undergraduates, much as ye are doing now.’

EASTER term brought several changes into Herbert's staircase. A divinity student occupied the rooms beneath him, and a freshman, who had come up with him in the October term and had lodgings out of college, gladly availed himself of the vacant rooms on his landing.

He made himself very much at home on the first evening by borrowing all Herbert's crockery and his solitary tea-kettle, and returning it with exceeding gravity, and the bottom burnt out, on the following morning.

This being the usual way of making acquaintance at Cambridge, Herbert could do no less than propose, being of the same staircase, that they should know each other, and carried him off from the chaos of his boxes and things to have breakfast in his room with the assistance of Brown's tea-kettle, Brown seldom having any need of it before noon.

Brown had come up early, armed with another likeness of Maria, and fortified with the best of resolutions for keeping the term. His Tripos came on in May, so that it was quite time that he began to work in earnest.

By way of preparation, he got hopelessly drunk at a college wine before the end of the first week, and was brought home at one o'clock in the morning by his friends, and deposited outside his oak—having lost the key—where he was found by the divinity student, who took him in and put him into his own bed, and sat up shivering all through the night with him, until the bedmaker relieved him in the morning.

This was unfortunately only the beginning of other excesses,

Brown had got mixed up with a fast set, and, being utterly weak in purpose and in principle, was easily led away.

Herbert called upon him the morning after, as soon as his oak was open, returning the borrowed kettle, which the bedmaker had forgotten, and found him looking very white and miserable, and with a wet towel round his head.

The table was littered with small sodas, and in a puddle was a letter in the familiar handwriting of the Dean, and an open note lay before him from his tutor, requesting the favour of an immediate call.

Brown looked helplessly from these trophies of his night's dissipation to Herbert, who looked very grave.

'You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Brown!' he began severely, puckering his frank forehead into a frown.

Brown groaned aloud.

'Don't hit a fellow when he's down,' he whined.

'I don't know, old man, that a good whipping wouldn't be about the best thing for you,' returned his Mentor severely. 'I think it's a great pity they've banished the rod here. They whipped Milton at Christ's, and made a poet of him; and if they whipped you in time there might be a chance of making a parson of you some day.'

'I'm afraid that's all over,' said Brown ruefully, pushing the Dean's letter out of the puddle to Herbert.

He opened the wet epistle, the soda water falling off it in great tears upon the floor as he read. It was very brief and to the purpose.

'DEAR SIR' (it began),

'Your attendance last term at chapel was not such as to qualify you for testimonials for Holy Orders.

'I am, yours sincerely,

'H. C. THORPE, Dean.'

'I say, old man, this is serious,' said Herbert pulling a very grave face. 'This is your last term, you know. You *must* turn over a new leaf, Brown. Just think of the old governor—and Maria!'

'I've done nothing but think of 'em,' Brown groaned. His little red eyes were very moist, and something was trickling down his cheeks; it might have been the water from the towel. 'I've been thinking about 'em all night. It was thinking about 'em brought me to this,' and he glanced helplessly at the half-emptied sodas. 'I couldn't stay here alone, after Hall, for thinking of 'em, and I went over to Grinley's and had some nap, and this is what's come of it!'

'Nap!' repeated his Mentor, quite angry now in earnest; 'and lost your money again! How much did you lose last night, Brown? Now, no evasion; tell me the exact truth.'

A spasm of real contrition passed over Brown's little, weak face, and he groaned audibly.

'Pon my honour, Flowers,' he whimpered, 'I haven't the least idea.'

As they were talking, some men came in with their notebooks in their hands.

'What! not at lecture, Brown? I say, you'll never get your certificate. Old Robinson's awfully particular, and you haven't put in an appearance this term.'

'I couldn't very well go like this,' said Brown sulkily, pointing to the moist turban that encircled his brows.

The men laughed. They were strong, ruddy, muscular fellows; the artless roses of their youth had not paled yet in the atmosphere of stale tobacco and college wines.

'You didn't take enough seltzer in your brandy, old man; it took four of us to get you home.'

'Oh, I'm sure I'm obliged to you!' Brown mumbled: and he held his head down and tried to control a tremor in his voice. 'You haven't an idea now, have you, how much I lost to Grinley at that confounded nap?'

'How much? Oh, I should think something stiff. I saw you writing an I.O.U. You can trust Grinley, *he* won't forget!' And with this delightful assurance the good-natured fellows went laughing down the stairs.

When Herbert looked into Brown's room after Hall—where the invalid did not appear—he met him with a ghastly face.

'Oh, Flowers!' he groaned; 'it's all up! I lost twenty pounds to Grinley last night—it's all square, he has my paper for it—besides my allowance for the term; and—and I haven't a penny in the world!'

The poor fellow burst into tears; they were real enough now, for the towel no longer encircled his brows.

'How do you know? Has Grinley been here?'

'Oh yes; he's been here right enough,' said Brown bitterly. 'I should think you could smell his confounded scent. He came here before chapel, with his big diamond flashing, and his great shining teeth flashing, and his cold, calculating eyes flashing like steel; and he sits there where you sit' (Herbert unconsciously got up); 'and he pulls out a paper and reminds me of my little debt. My little debt! and I know no more about it, on my honour, Flowers, than a babe unborn!'

Herbert ground his heel in his impetuous way into Brown's poor hearthrug. A little scene rose up before his eyes at this moment, and a livid face came between him and Brown.

Brown's was quite ghastly enough, and his poor weak, blue eyes were red and swollen, and his lank hair hung over his miserable little face.

'Did—you look at the paper?' Herbert asked awkwardly.

'Oh yes; it was right enough,' Brown said, with a dismal sigh; 'it's quite square. He'll have to wait, though—everybody will have to wait; but what the poor old governor will say when it comes to his ears, Heaven only knows!'

It was no use crying over spilt milk; and Brown made so many vows of amendment in the future, that his Mentor's severe attitude relaxed towards him, and he carried the prodigal upstairs to his own room, and gave him a cup of coffee, and allowed him a smoke, and introduced him to his new neighbour, who had dropped in by the way to borrow something.

Brown was so moved by the mild excitement of the coffee that he poured out the story of his woes to his new acquaintance, and told him, quite in confidence, that he was engaged to the dearest girl in the world—in fact, he had her likeness downstairs; and if Odworth, the ingenuous freshman, would go down with him, he would, in the strictest confidence, show it to him.

He couldn't remember where he had put the latest edition of Maria when he got back to his room, but he turned over the papers on his table, and found the one that was lying there last term, face downwards, and handed it with much pride and satisfaction to his new acquaintance.

'Oh!' said the other by way of comment, opening his eyes to an unusual width:—'oh!' and he laid the photograph down in its usual recumbent position, with a certain instinctive recognition of Brown's delicacy in displaying to the vulgar gaze the charms which the lady's scanty drapery revealed.

Herbert heard him singing to himself when he settled down to work for the night:

'Oh, Kicklebury Brown! oh, Kicklebury Brown!
What a precious little fool you are!'

Brown went from bad to worse. In defiance of the Dean's severe frown, and Maria's tender letters, and the hopeful, encouraging epistles from the little country vicarage, which always brought, at least, an honest flush of shame to his cherubic countenance and a momentary spasm of contrition, he neglected his chapels, evaded his lectures, ignored his work, and fuddled away his days in smoking, and drinking, and playing nap, or driving with Geraint or Grinley over to Newmarket, and returning after the college gates were closed.

Herbert remonstrated with him, but he didn't give him up. The divinity student remonstrated, the Dean remonstrated, his tutor remonstrated; in fact, everybody remonstrated with the weak, well-meaning, simple-minded fellow, who was liked as much as he was laughed at by the whole college, which was saying a great deal. Does that wild, thoughtless life bear telling altogether? Candour must draw a veil somewhere; let it draw a veil over Brown's youthful follies.

In spite of everybody's remonstrance Brown went from bad to worse. He not only floundered into all the sloughs that men usually have to get through in the course of their University career, but he went out of his way to tumble into one or two that lay quite out of the beaten track—for poor men.

He went to Newmarket with Grinley, and lost money there.

Geraint lost, too; he always lost, but he always paid with the best grace in the world, signing his name to a carefully-written cheque as steadily as if it were a subscription to a charity. Brown had no money to pay, and his signature wasn't worth the paper it was written on; but he wrote his name nevertheless, at the foot of all sorts of documents; and his miserable little conscience, that was powerless to keep him straight, stung him so dreadfully whenever he was sober, and when he allowed himself to think, that he grew more reckless than ever.

The duns began to gather in quite an appalling array outside his oak. He kept it sported generally, and only admitted his friends upon given signals. His tutor heard of it, and threatened to write to his father; but Brown promised amendment, and vowed he would pay them all off within a week.

He would, no doubt, if he had the money, unless a pleasanter way of spending it had occurred to him, but he hadn't a penny in the world.

So he sat at home with his oak sported, a prey to the deepest anguish and remorse; he dared not go out by day, for a man of sinister aspect had been lurking about his staircase for days, waiting to pounce upon him directly the protecting oak was unlatched. He caught him at last, in spite of his precautions, and Brown came into Herbert's room with a very white face, and a nasty yellow paper in his hand, which he was holding at arm's length, as if it would sting him.

He threw it down before Herbert with a groan, and flung himself into a chair.

'The gods are just,' he said with a tragic air, 'and of our pleasant vices make instruments to scourge us! Scourge number one!'

'By Jove, this is serious!' said Herbert, turning over the bilious looking document. It bore a great seal in the corner, impressed with the arms of the County Court holden at Cambridge, and some cabalistic characters, on the margin of which the sum total of debt and costs, as it kindly explained, amounted to £33 18s. 6d. 'What will you do, Brown?' he asked, when he had read the summons carefully through.

'Do?' said the other moodily; 'go to the Jews, I suppose—which is only another name for going to the devil. Get old Hundred-per-Cent. to lend me fifty, and pay it off, and some of the others. I must pay some of the fellows, or they'll be coming down upon the governor.'

'I wouldn't go to the Jews if I were you, Brown,' said Herbert reflectively; 'I'd make a clean breast of it to the governor.'

'It's no use,' said the other shaking his head gloomily. 'I couldn't do it—I haven't the heart to do it.'

'Nonsense,' said Herbert cheerfully; 'he'd soon get over it. There would be, of course, the usual *mauvais quart d'heure*, and then he'd come round and square up—and you'd promise it shouldn't happen again, and so forth; and then you'd shake hands, and it would be all over.'

'All over! Oh, Flowers, you don't know half!' and Brown groaned aloud. 'This is nothing to those other things—those cursed I.O.U.'s. It would break the dear old boy's heart, if it came to his ears. I've disappointed him enough already—and cost him enough—Heaven knows! He'd pay 'em if he could; he's never refused me anything, and he's never reproached me. But there are seven of us, and I the eldest, and he's only a poor country parson, and has enough to do to make both ends meet already.'

'Still, I would tell him, Brown. I'm sure it would be best; he would advise you what to do.'

'I know exactly what he would do,' said Brown gloomily; 'he would pinch himself, and wear a thin coat through the winter, and go without a fire in the study, and cut off his glass of port at dinner, and his daily paper, and sell the old gray pony and go through the wet lanes on foot to visit his people, and serve that mission chapel on the hill, three miles off, through the worst roads in the county. Yes, he'd do all this, and never complain. God bless him, dear old boy!'

The tears were in Brown's eyes now, and running down his white cheeks, and Herbert saw the printed letters on the nasty yellow paper through a mist. He was thinking of the little mother at Bideford, who was doing precisely the same things for him in her way at that very moment.

'No,' said Herbert huskily, 'I don't think it would do to tell him. Why don't you take it to Routh, and ask him what you can do?'

'Routh? Won't do, old fellow. I'm in bad odour enough in that quarter already. No, I must raise the wind.'

And Brown, with a dismal attempt at cheerfulness, sallied forth on that profitable pursuit.

Mr. Routh was a tutor of Trinity—the most amiable and urbane of tutors—and he would certainly have given Brown the wisest and kindest of advice in his perplexity, accompanied, doubtless, by a suitable reproof. Not very severe, for Brown's debts were but grains of sand to the magnificent debts of the other men of Trinity. But instead of that the silly fellow proceeded to raise the wind in the time-honoured way of ingenious undergraduates, without a thought of the whirlwind that he would reap by-and-by.

CHAPTER X.

THE BEDMAKER'S GHOST.

HERBERT had changed his rooms early in the term, and gone down a floor lower in the regular order, *au troisième* the first year, a *second* the second. But he had gone down a little earlier, and the change was brought about in a ridiculous manner.

It was only another exemplification of the old adage that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. Herbert had been engaged in that virtuous exercise a good deal lately.

Since his accident he had somewhat relaxed his reading, spending an hour in other men's rooms after Hall, discussing art, wine, politics, the future of the college boat, instead of sporting his oak and burning the virtuous midnight oil.

He had been spending the evening in Geraint's room with some kindred spirits, not the boating set, who had given them up long ago. Geraint's shoulder was still too weak for him to be any good in the May races, and Herbert only did a little solitary tubbing to keep himself in practice.

'Never mind, old man,' Geraint said in that delightful, sanguine manner of his that took off all disappointments; 'we'll go in for the Lent by-and-by; we'll show them what we can do!'

It was a very small wine, just a few men of the staircase; the divinity student had gone away early. He was a nervous, crotchety fellow, who had a horror of smoke, and wore a little undignified bit of blue ribbon in his button-hole. The men of his staircase would no doubt have made fun of Jayne's modest decoration; but he had been so hardly treated by Nature that he was considerably spared by his fellows.

The divinity student had a club-foot; where other men leaped, he limped painfully and slowly. He was cut off by his infirmity from the healthy, active life of the University, from the boating and the cricketing, the football and tennis, and all that made up the enjoyment of other men.

By his own act he had still further cut himself off from the companionship of the good fellows of his college, from wines, and card-parties, and supper-parties, and hung out a little trumpery blue flag, and shielded himself behind it whenever temptation assailed.

Directly the cards were brought out Jayne rose to go.

'Don't go, old fellow,' said Geraint, gathering the cards up; 'here, we'll throw 'em into the fire and have some singing instead,' and, suiting the action to the word, he flung the cards under the grate—there was no fire in it.

'Fact is,' said Jayne nervously, 'I've got a Bible-class in Barn-well, and I'm a little late as it is; it takes me a long time to walk

there ;' and he looked down at his lame foot and sighed. Then remembering himself, he reddened fiercely. 'I don't suppose that any of you would care to help ?' he said hesitatingly, as he limped over to the door : 'we want workers so much ; there's a great deal to be done among the boys, and the work's begun ; but we want help ;' and he glanced back over his shoulder at the men at the table, and his eye seemed to rest upon Brown.

There was no response, and he shut the door behind him, and they heard him limping painfully down the stairs. The men laughed, and Geraint threw away his cigar, and looked at the strip of blue evening sky that could be seen through his open window, and softly repeated to himself : 'Barnwell !'

The wine flowed freer and the talk faster after Jayne was gone, and the cards were picked up quite uninjured out of the grate, and there was a little nap. Brown slipped away in the midst, and Herbert would have followed him, but Geraint detained him while Cudworth sat down at the piano and obliged the company with one of his select and delightful comic songs.

Singing wasn't much in Herbert's way, and he tossed over rather impatiently the things on Geraint's writing-table until the song should be over. A subtle perfume warned him before his hand touched the little pink note in the handwriting he knew so well. He threw it down directly with a guilty blush, and a photograph fell out on the table. He turned away and tried to resist the temptation ; but his eyes wandered back to the photograph. The lovely face was lovelier than ever as it glanced archly over her velvet shoulder, and the beautiful dead-gold hair fell in a sweeping mass below her waist.

Herbert saw none of these details : he only saw the pleading look in the dark, gazelle-like eyes, and her voice was again ringing in his ears.

'You will not betray me !'

The whole dreadful scene rose up before him, and he staggered to a table and poured out a brimming cup of wine. This was the last thing that Herbert remembered of that wretched evening's work. He was unused to wines, and the fumes of the Latakia confused him, and he had a hazy recollection of going nap so many times, until the last coin in that little netted purse rolled out upon the table.

Then he stumbled up to bed ; but Nemesis had gone up before him. He crept humbly to bed, too bewildered to remember a certain old-fashioned custom he had learnt at his mother's knee before he laid his flushed face and uneasy conscience upon the pillow.

It had not lain there long before there came an ominous rap on the door of the ghost's cupboard in his keeping-room. He had forgotten to close his chamber-door, so he heard it very distinctly.

'It's that confounded nap,' said Herbert, resolutely turning his face to his uncomfortable pillow.

During the vacation, when all the other men were down, Herbert and the ghost had the staircase all to themselves, and she had not reminded him in any way of her existence. Indeed, during his illness she had behaved with great delicacy and consideration, and had not required any trifle in the way of a tong or a coal-scuttle to be flung at the door where she habitually kept.

Rap, rap, came again more distinctly upon the midnight air.

'What a fool I was to take that champagne!' he said uneasily.

The knocking was repeated with renewed vigour, as if a boot had been applied to emphasize it.

Then he suddenly remembered the story of the bedmaker's ghost, and sat upright in bed, and listened.

His hair didn't exactly stand on end—it was an awkward length, as he wore it long—but a particularly creepy, crawly sensation stole shyly up his spine and affected his circulation.

He had not long to listen before the knockings were repeated with renewed vigour, as if the ghost were growing impatient.

It was uncanny, to say the least of it, and in his bewildered state he could not remember where he had put the matches, and there was no moon, and everybody on the staircase was asleep with his oak sported.

Herbert suddenly remembered he hadn't sported his, and some vision of hasty flight passed through his brain; but he rejected it as unworthy of an undergraduate mind.

It was of no use his telling himself that it was the champagne, or the Latakia, or the state of his nerves—the knockings were repeated with so much vigour, as if a hundred bedmakers were shut up in that gloomy den, and a quite appalling volley of execrations, as if each separate bedmaker were using unparliamentary language, issued from behind that awful door.

Herbert, muddled and confused, but gathering himself up by an effort, crossed the floor of his keeping-room, coming into collision with a beam or two on the way, and opened the door of the troubled closet beyond.

It was quite dark, but as he opened the door—suddenly and noiselessly—a heavy body rolled over at his feet.

Herbert Flowers was not quite so well the following morning, and when the doctor who had attended him in his illness made inquiries as to the exciting causes of this relapse, the little story of the college wine, and the nap—no, this little story did not come out—and the bedmaker's ghost came out.

This last was easily explained.

The new tenant, Cudworth, who 'kept' on the opposite side of the staircase, groping his way up after midnight from the wine below, had quite naturally mistaken his room. Sufficient intelligence remaining to enable him to remember that his sleeping apartment was on the right, he had opened the door of Herbert's gyp's

den, and shut himself in, and when he found out his mistake was unable to find the handle of the door and get out again.

The doctor looked grave—graver than these foolish stories seemed to demand—and recommended Herbert to do two things: abstain from college wines, and change his rooms.

A dozen men generously came forward and offered to change rooms with him.

He was so ridiculously shaken in his nerves that he gladly accepted the offer of the divinity student, Jayne, who kept below him.

His poor furniture looked bare and insufficient in his new rooms; but every man on the staircase found out, quite suddenly, that he had more chairs, and tables, and rugs, and pictures than he could find a place for, and begged Herbert, as a personal favour, to give them room.

He saw through the kindly subterfuge, and accepted their offers in the same generous spirit in which they were made. Nor did their kindness end here. For a whole week it was the quietest staircase in the quad, and the man beneath him put off a wine on his account.

He was a third-year man, and was supposed to be reading for his Tripos, so perhaps, as the time was short, it was quite as well he did put it off.

He didn't do much reading, however, on the night when it should have come off. He occupied the time in knocking nails in Herbert's walls, and hanging up the pictures that were stacked in heaps on the floor. The noise didn't exactly suit his head, but it would have been ungracious to say so, so he went about with it wrapped up in a wet towel, and found room for all the pets of the Ballet and the Ring, the eminent scholars and divines of Trinity, the boating crews and endless college clubs of the 'Varsity that his friends had thrust upon him.

Jayne had left a text behind him, which, as it was in Hebrew, and none of them could read it, and it looked like work, they considerably hung over his mantel-piece. The effect was incongruous, but it was novel.

Geraint—who was wining with some men below—came up to remonstrate, and stayed to help, and brought his friends up with him.

Notwithstanding this picture-hanging kept him up late, Herbert was early at chapel the following morning, which is more than most of the men of his staircase were, and his braces were not trailing behind him, nor did he wear his slippers and betray other evidences of a hasty toilet, as many Trinity men did who were to be seen on that bright summer morning hurrying across the Great Court.

Neither of the men who assisted in hanging the ballet girls and the bishops put in an appearance at morning chapel, and when

Herbert took his privileged walk in the Fellows' Garden, when the service was over, he had the sweet May morning, with its song of birds and scent of flowers, all to himself.

The purple lilac was nodding overhead, and the hawthorn was scattering its summer snow at his feet, and down through a sunny aisle, with the gold of her hair shining afar off in the morning sunshine, Lilian Howell came to meet him.

He could not have passed her if he would—he had not got a wet towel round his head now, but a modest college trencher, rather limp in the extremities—for she stopped him in the midst of the green alley with a swift, sudden reproach in her bright eyes.

'Oh, Mr. Flowers, I heard that you were ill, that you had had another accident.'

Herbert blushed, and replied guiltily :

'Not an accident exactly. It was my own fault, Miss Howell ; I don't deserve your pity.'

'I don't think you do ; but it is very disappointing, when we thought you were getting on so well. I hope it won't happen again, Mr. Flowers ;' and she swept by him in her little print frock with as magnificent an air as if she were the Master himself in his rustling silk doctor's gown.

He watched her passing between the hawthorns and down the sunny path, with the blue hyacinths crowding up at her feet, and a lark singing overhead, with her rebuke ringing in his ears. He was a very foolish undergraduate, for it sounded sweeter to him than any words of praise that had ever fallen from any woman's lips before, and he crept humbly back to his rooms, thankful for these small crumbs of blame that showed that Lilian Howell was disappointed in him.

He went straight to an untidy drawer in his writing-table, tossing the contents impatiently over, and got out the forgotten copy of those Latin hexameters, and recast them, touching them here and there lovingly with a tender hand. He read them modestly to his new friend Jayne, who now kept above him, who declared they were first-rate.

Herbert had not much opinion of them himself, but upon his advice he sent them in, and was more surprised than any other man in the college when the intelligence reached him that he had won the Latin hexameter prize.

Meanwhile Brown's affairs were a source of much anxiety to him, almost as much, indeed, as to the foolish, improvident fellow himself. Their rooms were on the same landing now, hence they saw more of each other, and Brown was rushing across at all hours of the day, whenever he saw the coast clear of duns, to Herbert's room, to pour out his weak, unavailing regrets, or to tell him of fresh difficulties, that, like Job's, were daily closing in around him.

The tradesmen of Cambridge, with delightful unanimity, were down upon him ; possibly they had only now realized the leanness

of his expectations. In his last term, just as he was going up for his degree, they were besieging him for payment, and some had written to his tutor.

He was much too cowardly to come to an understanding with his persecutors, so he sported his oak and lived in a state of siege.

One morning, when things were quite at their worst, he came flying into Herbert's room with an open letter in his hand.

'Hooray!' he shouted, flourishing it before Herbert's astonished eyes; 'hooray! there's deliverance out of the hands of the Philistines, Flowers; just read this! There's a fellow who lives at a convenient distance come to the rescue. Isn't it quite Providential?'

Herbert took the letter and turned it over with a curious feeling of repugnance.

It was very nicely written, and it dated from quite an aristocratic quarter in St. James's, and it bore a dainty little monogram on the seal.

'Private and strictly confidential,' was written in a soothing and agreeable manner in the corner.

Herbert opened the letter gingerly, with an indefinable reluctance, and read:

'DEAR SIR,

'Should you require an immediate loan of a few hundred pounds, I shall be happy to let you have it on "promissory note" alone, without other surety or security, per return of post. As I lend my own money, it places me in a position to do business upon very favourable terms.

'Yours truly,

'AMOS SMYTHE.'

'Well,' said Brown eagerly, when he had finished the precious epistle, and put it back with a feeling of relief in its envelope. 'Well?'

'Well?' said Herbert, and they looked at each other in silence.

'There can't be any doubt about accepting the fellow's offer,' said Brown nervously; his little white face was twitching, and his weak, watery blue eyes were dreadfully eager.

'I don't know,' said Herbert; 'I hope, please God, I never shall know anything about these fellows; but I would ask someone who knows more about it than we do—who's had experience in such things. Why not ask Grinley?'

Brown groaned.

'I owe him so much already!'

'How much?' Herbert asked.

He remembered how generously Grinley had behaved when he had lost money to him at cards.

'How much?' repeated Brown drearily. 'Oh, a dence of a lot!'

'It was twenty pounds the other day; have you doubled it?'

Brown laughed a dreadful little hollow laugh, and his white face grew whiter under Herbert's scrutiny.

'Doubled it?' he repeated bitterly. 'I owe Grinley two hundred pounds!'

'Good heavens! Herbert exclaimed. 'You don't mean to tell me, Brown, in your sober senses, that you owe two hundred pounds in gambling debts?'

'Not in gambling debts only; that is, not over cards,' returned the other incoherently; 'we have had some other transactions. You know I went to Newmarket with him. Confound him.'

'And were brought home drunk after midnight. It's a wonder you weren't sent down then, old man.'

'That's it. I have no idea what happened. I have to take his word for it. I backed some confounded horse that he recommended—he pretended to back it himself—and lost, and got into a deuce of a row, he tells me; and—and—he advanced the money to get me out of it, and brought me home.'

'And you don't remember anything about it?'

'Not a bit. I had to take his word for it. He's got my I.O.U., or promissory note, or whatever you call it, and I shall have to raise the money some day.'

'It's a deuced ugly story,' said Herbert to himself, as he sat turning it over in his mind when Brown was gone. 'It's about the shadiest thing I ever heard.'

CHAPTER XI.

A STILL, SMALL VOICE.

'A still, small voice spake unto me:
Thou art so sure of thy degree,
Were it not better have a spree?'

In spite of Brown's protest, he did consult Grinley about the money-lending affair, and the upshot of it was that Grinley offered to introduce him to a man who would lend him the money on better terms.

He offered, too, what was better still, to get a bill discounted for Brown through a friend, which he told him would save an awful lot of interest—a bill due at three months, and renewable, of course, at the end of that time, if not convenient for him to meet it.

Of course he gratefully accepted this generous offer, and after Hall he repaired, with an air of elation that was quite new to him on his simple, cherubic countenance, to Grinley's rooms in King's Parade.

Herbert heard him an hour after come up the staircase, and slam his door to with unwonted energy. He rather wondered that he

had not come in to tell him the result, and he threw down his book and hurried across the landing.

On entering the room he found Brown sitting in an armchair before his empty grate with his face buried in his hands. He looked up when Herbert entered—a ghastly haggard face, with all the soft lines of his fair, round, innocent youth, the simple artlessness that had won him the name of ‘Cherub,’ stamped out of it.

Herbert closed the door softly and came over to him.

‘You’ve seen him, then, old fellow?’ he said, dropping his voice quite unconsciously in a sort of involuntary pity.

Brown nodded his head, but did not speak.

‘You saw him?’

An oath, or a sound that strangely partook of a groan and an execration, fell from his white lips as he again buried his face in his hands.

‘What have you done?’ Herbert asked nervously; his voice shook in spite of himself.

‘I’ve given Grinley a bill, an acceptance, or some such infernal thing, for two hundred and fifty pounds,’ he answered desperately, without looking up.

‘Two hundred and fifty pounds!’ echoed Herbert aghast.

He sat down now, and faced Brown with a face as white as his own.

Brown got up nervously and walked, or rather staggered, over and shut the outer oak.

‘For Heaven’s sake be careful, Flowers!’ he said, sinking wearily back into his seat; ‘if this comes to the Dean’s ears or Routh’s, I shall be sent down. Grinley tells me I must not let a living creature in the college know about it.’

‘No, I suppose not,’ said Herbert bitterly. ‘He couldn’t afford it. What the deuce did he mean by extracting two hundred and fifty pounds?’

‘It’s that cursed debt I owe him,’ Brown groaned, looking desperately into the empty grate. ‘It’s all square, you know; he’d got my acceptance for it. He’s added another fifty to it for me. He wouldn’t do it unless I agreed to include the two hundred.’

‘You shouldn’t have agreed to this, Brown,’ Herbert said softly. ‘You should have held out. It’s taking a mean advantage of you.’

‘I couldn’t help it; indeed I couldn’t,’ moaned Brown. ‘The fellow’s got such a hold upon me that he can turn and twist me as he likes. I believe if he were to tell me to blow my brains out I should do it,’ he concluded gloomily.

Next day he burst into Herbert’s room with quite a flush of indignation on his simple countenance.

‘I say, this is too bad, though,’ he blurted out, throwing a little heap of dirty Bank of England notes on the table. ‘I agreed to take fifty, and I’ve only got thirty-five—fifteen pounds deducted for interest.’

'Wasn't it in the bargain?' Herbert asked indignantly, more flushed and angry than Brown. 'If it wasn't, I'd go to the Dean with it and expose him. It's a nasty, mean, blackguard trick!'

'I'm afraid I can't say,' Brown answered hesitatingly. 'I was so taken back, so bewildered by the whole thing, that I didn't pay any attention to the terms. I took it for granted that I should have the fifty. It would have stopped the fellows' mouths for a time; but what can I do with thirty-five?'

Herbert had to seize his cap and gown and fly off to a lecture, and left him doing a dismal sum in mental arithmetic—the first mathematical problem of any kind that he had attempted this term. He was so immersed in abstruse calculations as he crossed the landing to his rooms that he came into collision with Cudworth, who was flying down over the stairs, late as usual for lecture, with a note-book in his hand, trilling his favourite comic song:

'Oh, Kicklebury Brown! oh, Kicklebury Brown!
What a silly old man you are!'

Brown evidently worked out the dismal problem to his satisfaction, as he spent the whole of the following morning going round the town paying little bills, and stopping the mouths of his larger creditors, as he termed it, when, however commendable the duty he was performing, he ought to have been engaged behind his oak preparing for the examination that came off on the morrow.

Then he went down the river and saw the crews practising, and dropped into another man's rooms, and came back to his college after dark without his cap and gown, and was proctorized on the way.

It was his luck, he told Herbert, when the same thing happened the following day as he was going up for his exam.

It was the first day, and the men who came early indulged in a weed by the way, and threw the ends of their cigars, half alight, on the steps as they went in, or stood calmly at the door knocking out the ashes of their pipes against its sacred portal. But nobody troubled them; probably they were richer men—and certainly luckier.

Brown came up late, with the end of a harmless little cigarette in his mouth, and Nemesis steps up behind him, and, tapping him on the shoulder, politely requests to be favoured with his name and his college.

Crestfallen, and taking it as an omen of ill-luck, Brown goes in to his exam. It was rough upon Brown, picking him out from among a hundred others, but it was his luck. He cursed it often enough, but it clung to him nevertheless. He was cursing it all through the examination, when he ought to have been doing his papers. But for that unlucky *contretemps* on the steps—a quarter of a second would have saved him—he felt he could have done the paper before him easily. Now he could not fix his mind upon it

for three consecutive minutes. The suave countenance of the Proctor kept coming up between him and the printed page, and once he found himself drawing from memory a tolerably correct likeness of that familiar face on his paper, under the serious impression that it was one of the figures required by the examiners.

He went back to his college and cursed his luck for the rest of the evening. Instead of preparing for the morrow, and sitting up half the night with a wet towel round his head, as many men in Trinity were doing, he sat up wining with a man on another staircase, and was brought home and put to bed just as the sweet May morning was breaking behind the gray battlements of the Great Court.

Herbert had to drag him out of bed the next morning, and give him a shower-bath, and ply him with small sodas, and carry him off to the door of the hall where the examination was held, without any breakfast.

He hadn't much faith in his getting through in that soddened state, with all the bells in Cambridge, as he declared, ringing in his ears.

However, there was no Proctor's face to come between him and his papers to-day; but a very strange thing happened, as he told Herbert after:

'That confounded yellow dog of Grinley's got in the place, and was smelling around him all the time. It was a wonder the examiner didn't turn him out, but nobody took any notice of it.'

Herbert locked him in his rooms after Hall, and took away the key of his oak, under the fond impression that he would work till bedtime; but on going in some hours later he found an empty brandy bottle on the table, and Brown helplessly drunk on the floor.

He called Cudworth, who helped him to get him up and put him to bed.

'Oh, Brown,' Herbert remonstrated with him as he was struggling out of his clothes, 'this is too bad. You should think of Maria!'

'That's just it, my—dear—fellah,' said Brown thickly; 'done nothin', 'pon my soul, but think o' Maria. Whatsh the shong, Cudworth?—you oughterknow?—'bout Missh Bailey?'

'All right, old fellow, only substituting Maria as the demoralizing deity. Don't wonder at it, 'pon my word!'

He was thinking of the likeness of the pet of the ballet that was still lying face downward among the litter on Brown's table:

'Oh, Maria! Unfortunate Maria!

He took to drinking gin and rum, and thought upon Maria!'

Brown went on his sorrowful way to the examinations; but one day it was a rat—'a confounded great black rat was running about the floor the whole time,' he explained, and he couldn't fix his attention upon his papers for a moment; and though he looked

round and pointed to it several times, nobody attempted to catch it.

Another day his enemy took the form of a lizard.

'Quite a harmless kind of a lizard,' he explained to Herbert, 'but it was deuced odd that none of the other fellows took any notice of them!'

'Were there many of 'em?' he asked, not that he believed for a moment in Brown's illusions; he thought he was a little overdone, and the worry and anxiety he had lately gone through had upset him.

'Many,' Brown repeated; 'the floor was black with 'em. I shouldn't be surprised if I haven't brought some home with me.'

He shuddered as he spoke, and Herbert saw him shake an invisible something off his sleeve.

'There, I thought so!' he said nervously. 'You saw that, Flowers?'

'Come along, old man, and have a cup of tea,' Herbert answered, leading him, shaking in every limb, across the passage.

He couldn't drink the tea that he poured out for him; his hands shook so dreadfully that he spilled the scalding liquid over his legs, and his face grew ashen gray, and great beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead, and his eyes were bright and restless.

'I don't mind telling you, Flowers,' he said in an agitated whisper; 'but there's been a snake up my sleeve all the day. Don't touch it!' he cried out in alarm as Herbert, to humour him, helped to relieve him of his coat; 'it'll bite. It's a poisonous one, too, by Jove!'

It was a very uncanny thing to see him, with a shudder of loathing, shaking the invisible thing off his arm, and then, with his teeth set and his eyes starting dreadfully, grind his heel down savagely upon the *something* on the floor.

His horrible vision, whatever it was, was real enough to him, and he lay back in his chair, after this effort, with a groan, covering his face with his nerveless hands.

Clearly he could not be left, and Herbert waited beside him until he heard a step on the staircase. It was Jayne limping slowly up over the stairs. Somehow, his halting footstep always sounded like a reproach in his ears. It was evidently so trying to him to get up, and his rooms were on the top. Of course he had made the exchange of his own free-will—had insisted upon it, indeed; but the irony of it smote upon Herbert's conscience painfully.

He called him as he passed the door, and Jayne came in. The abnormal excitement had passed for the moment, and Brown was lying back in his chair with his eyes closed.

Herbert held up his finger with an air of mystery, and pointed significantly to Brown, and in a constrained voice asked Jayne to have a cup of tea.

He took the hint, and was dropping wearily into a chair on the other side of the hearth, when Brown sprang up with a sudden cry, and, pointing to the chair with a shaking hand, exclaimed :

'Take care, take care! Good heavens, it's in the chair!'

Jayne jumped up nervously and looked down, but there was nothing but a harmless cushion that the little mother had worked for Herbert. He caught sight of his warning finger and sat down with a sigh.

'It's all right, Brown,' he said, quietly ; 'it's all right, my dear fellow ; it's gone now, whatever it was.'

'It was a snake,' said Brown with a shudder—'a venomous black snake. It was curled up where you are sitting! It must have slid off on the floor ; get a stick, a poker, Flowers ; it's under the chair now. Kill it! Kill it!'

He was shrieking these words out, and looking with an expression of sickening disgust and terror on the floor. Before Herbert could stop him he had seized the poker from the hearth and was striking fiercely, with mad frenzy, at some object before him.

'Do you remember the brazen serpent, Brown?' said Jayne, limping over to his side and quietly taking the weapon from him. He sat down beside him and held the poor fellow's clammy hand in his.

The touch seemed to quiet him, and the spasmodic twitchings relaxed.

'Ye-es,' he answered feebly ; 'I remember—in Barnwell.'

'Exactly,' said the other, brightening up ; 'in Barnwell. They've got a lot of serpents there—deadly ones ; and whenever they are bitten there's only one thing that they can do ; there's only one thing that you and I can do. You remember we were talking about it the other night when you called for me?'

'Yes, yes ; I remember,' Brown interrupted eagerly ; 'I know the story. But you see, Flowers hasn't got one in his room. A great mistake—a great mistake! There ought to be one in every room, with all these things about ;' and he looked down on the floor with that dreadful expression of loathing and revulsion on his face.

'Suppose we see if there's one in your room, Brown ; I shouldn't be surprised if there isn't. If not, we'll soon set up one above your bed that'll kill all the snake-bites in Cambridge.'

Between them they led him back into his room. On the way he paused, and raised his foot and ground his heel down savagely upon the landing as if he were crushing a reptile beneath it.

They got him to bed quietly upon the promise of setting up a brazen serpent for him to look at, in case he should be bitten by any of the creatures that he declared were crawling over his bed.

Herbert sat beside him while Jayne went upstairs to fetch it, and to ask Cudworth to come down.

He returned presently with a large metal cross in his hand.

'I'm no Romanist,' he explained to Herbert nervously ; 'but I

like to keep this always before my eyes to remind me, beside its great lesson, that the servant is not greater than his Master—that suffering and sacrifice are the conditions of the highest life here. I need to have it before me to remind me very often, I am so apt to forget.’

‘You?’ said Herbert, with an uneasy consciousness of his own shortcomings.

‘Yes, indeed,’ said the other with a sigh; ‘when I see all this youth, and strength, and lusty life around me, I am very apt to complain. Why, I was jealous of you and Brown the other day—poor Brown here!—when I saw you punting on the river.’

Brown looked up on hearing his voice; he had dozed off in a sort of stupor, and he awoke out of it with a start.

‘Have you got it?’ he asked anxiously.

‘Yes, dear fellow; it is here,’ said Jayne, holding up the metal cross before his eyes. ‘It isn’t the cross itself, you know, but what it is the symbol of, like that brazen serpent of old.’

‘The Barnwell one?’

‘Yes, certainly—the Barnwell one. There is only one, you know!’

Brown looked up eagerly.

‘Yes,’ he said with an air of relief, ‘that’s it! Put it where I can see it, Jayne; there—there—they are coming on now—crowds of ’em! Put it there—quick—or it will be too late!’

They fixed the cross up on the opposite wall where he could see it without effort, and for a time he was pacified. But his hands, which lay outside the counterpane, were cold and clammy, and twitched spasmodically, or clutched the bedclothes in a vague purposeless, jerky way.

Herbert, who had never seen anything of the kind, had grown white to the lips, and watched the poor fellow’s movements with an awful fascination. He could hardly recognise the easy-going, simple-minded Brown of the cherubic countenance in the tremor-stricken man before him.

Cudworth and Geraint came in and looked at him, and turned away with blanched faces. A council was held in the adjoining room. Geraint proposed to send his own doctor, who would keep the matter dark. It was agreed that if it came to the ears of the college authorities it would be all over with Brown. He had not much chance as it was of getting through; but if his tutor heard of it he would send him down, or probably rusticate him altogether.

‘Think of his poor old father,’ said Herbert, with a catch in his throat; ‘you don’t know how he builds up on Brown’s success. You should see his letters! And the girl he is engaged to!’

‘Oh, Maria!’ Cudworth broke in involuntarily.

Herbert stopped him with a warning gesture.

'I beg your pardon,' he said humbly ; 'I believe that confounded girl is at the bottom of it !'

'Hush !' said Herbert sternly ; 'she is the best creature in the world. She is far too good for Brown !'

'O-o-oh !'

Cudworth's unfriendly criticism of Maria was cut short by the entrance of the bedmaker, who was immediately sworn to the strictest secrecy ; so also was the gyp, whose opinion it was thought desirable to take upon the state of the patient in the inner room. If experience gave weight to his opinion, he was certainly an authority.

'D. T. !' he exclaimed, with the air of a connoisseur, when he had looked at Brown for a minute or two, and listened to his ravings. 'Quite a mild case, gentlemen. Only it'll be as well to put razors and firearms out of his way, or anything that he'd be likely to do himself a mischief with.'

'You don't think we want a doctor ?' demanded the men in a breath.

'No, not as long as he keeps quiet. Tie him down in the bed, if he wants it, with a sheet or two. I'll put it round him, and you can tighten it if he gets troublesome. But someone must sit with him—two it should be. It's like most other madnesses ; he might kill himself, and you too, in one of these paroxysms, at any moment.'

With this cheerful possibility of a speedy termination of the miserable drama that was being enacted in the narrow little sleeping-room, the men decided to do without medical assistance, and to take their turn at watching through the night.

'A doctor means a nurse, you know, sir,' said the man of experience, wagging his head. 'No doctor would let him be left in that state without a proper nurse, most likely two ; and then it couldn't help coming to the tutor's ears. Safe to come out, and you know what 'ud happen.'

The men knew quite well what would happen, so they watched through the night by turns ; two in the inner room with the poor wretch tossing on the bed, and two keeping guard, and ready for any emergency in the keeping-room beyond.

Through the early part of the night he lay so still that they thought he slept, and opened the window to let in the cool, fresh air of the night. The Great Court was quite silent, and every light, except the lamp by the gateway, was out, and the moon was shining on the roof of the chapel.

Herbert stood looking out, thinking at that moment how the same moon was shining on the blue waters of the Torridge, and on the humble roof at Bideford, where the little mother slept beneath ; and, maybe, it was shining through a narrow casement he had looked out of, oh, so many, many times, upon that pure pillow.

The thought of what it shone upon there brought the tears into

his eyes, as he looked out into the Great Court, and at the many windows where men slept, and remembered that in rich or poor homes, scattered far and near, there was the same importunate love ever storming heaven's high gate for those who worked—or idled—here.

A cry from the bed made him turn hastily round. Brown had suddenly sat up, and was gazing with a look of unutterable terror on his face at something on the bed. Great drops of perspiration were on his forehead, and he was pointing with a trembling finger at a heap of bedclothes he had tossed aside in his unrest.

'Look!' he cried, with dreadfully starting eyes; 'look!'

Herbert looked involuntarily. There was nothing to be seen but a confused heap of bedclothes.

'There! Don't you see it? The cobra! See, it is coiled up at the foot!'

'My dear fellow, there is nothing there, indeed,' said Jayne soothingly. 'See!' and he rolled over the heap of bedclothes.

Brown gave a dreadful shriek that rent the air of the quiet quad, and rose upright in the bed.

'See!' he cried in a frenzy of terror; 'see, he is uncoiling! He is crawling up higher—higher!'

He leapt from the bed before Jayne could detain him, and flew past Herbert to the window. He caught him by the arm as he was struggling madly to get through, and the others rushing in from the outer room, they secured him, and between them they got him back to the bed screaming and cursing, and sobbing wildly.

No one could do anything with him but Jayne, and he never left his side through the night, soothing him in his wildest paroxysms, and allaying his terrors as the unclean shapes his imagination had conjured up thronged about him. He ever pointed him to the cross upon the wall, and bade him in his fiercest agonies, as the phantasmal horrors crowded around him, to 'look up!'

The poor terror-stricken wretch would raise his bloodshot eyes to the opposite wall, and gaze at it with a hungry yearning gaze that went to the hearts of impressionable undergraduates who gathered round his bed.

From gazing at it so long he began to smile, and from smiling to weep; and so, with a blessed rain of tears, he fell asleep—sobbed himself quietly to sleep, with Jayne's arm thrown round him as he had slept in the days of his innocent childhood in his mother's arms.

The sun rose over the Great Court of Trinity, and the blue sky of the sweet May morning appeared clear and cloudless above its turrets and battlements, and still he slept on within the shelter of Jayne's encircling arm.

When the chapel-bell rang he was still asleep, and the cramped, weary arm was still around him. Jayne would not move an inch, but stuck to his post with quite a happy smile on his poor tired face.

'Not for the world! not for the world!' he said under his breath when the others strove to relieve him. 'The slightest movement will arouse him. He will awake by-and-by, please God—quiet, and in his right mind.'

Herbert left Cudworth with him, and he and Geraint went across the quad in the morning sunshine to chapel.

He was so shaken with the events of the night, and with the memory of the awful Nemesis of his youthful follies that had overtaken the poor stricken wretch in that darkened room on the other side of the court, that he could not meet the clear eyes of the Trinity Lily. He could only bow his head down very humbly over his desk, and, with tears running down his cheeks, repeat those old familiar words—that he had found need to repeat so often of late—that he had learned at his mother's knee: 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil!'

Surely he had never repeated them so earnestly before!

CHAPTER XII.

BROWN PATRONUS.

'I passed beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown.'

ALL the precautions that Brown's friends had taken to prevent the nature of his illness coming to the ears of the Dons were unavailing.

Some Fellows, whose rooms looked out into the Great Court, had heard Brown's frenzied cries during the night: the sound may not have been unfamiliar to them; and the tutor had sent up to make inquiries before chapel, and the Dean himself came over after.

He met Herbert on the stairs, and learnt from him something of Brown's condition. Cudworth was asleep on the sofa when they went in, and he turned over uneasily and murmured an inaudible 'Oh, Maria!'

Brown was still sleeping with Jayne's arm around him; he raised a warning finger when they entered, then, seeing that it was the Dean, his white, tired face blushed rosy-red.

The Dean of Trinity nodded very kindly over to him, and asked him how long Brown had slept.

They told him since daybreak.

'Then he'll do,' he said, looking with a grave pity in his kind eyes on the sleeping man; 'he'll do until his father comes. I'm very sorry for him—at the close of his career, too. I am very sorry indeed for him! Poor Brown! poor Brown!'

He left the room, and Herbert followed him on to the landing.

'You spoke of his father, sir?' he said modestly when they reached the top of the stairs.

'Yes,' said the Dean, turning round; 'his father has been sent for. I am very sorry for him, a most worthy man! An old college friend; indeed, we took our degrees together. I am more grieved for him than I can tell.' He went down the stairs talking to himself, and unconsciously turning round the big ring he always wore on his little finger, which he was so in the habit of consulting when he was in any perplexity, or moved by the misdeeds of others, that the men irreverently termed it the 'Dean's familiar.'

There was a very touching story about that ring, which some men had heard, and they never heard it without tears.

Brown did not awake till nearly noon, and then he awoke quite himself; that is to say, he awoke pale and haggard, with feverish, restless eyes; but the visions of the night, the awful visions wrought by disease and fear, were gone—quite gone.

He could not understand why Jayne was there, nor why the men looked at him with such a strange pity in their eyes.

Jayne stayed with him while he made a hasty toilet, and held his peace guiltily while he searched unavailingly for his razors; and then Herbert came and sat with him, and Jayne and his cross went upstairs.

Herbert was silent and very sad; his heart was too full, thinking of the wrecked life before him, to talk much. Brown was peevish and irritable, finding fault with the examiners, with the college authorities, with the 'Varsity, with everybody and everything but his own folly. And all the while the sword of Damocles was hanging over his unconscious head, and none of his friends had the courage to warn him before it fell.

Later in the day a step was heard on the stairs, an unfamiliar step, that made Herbert's cheek turn pale, and he rose hurriedly and left the room.

At the door he encountered a florid, genial-looking man of middle age, rather out of breath with climbing the stairs. He wore the dress of a country parson, and his pleasant round face was so exactly like Brown's that Herbert recognised him in a moment as Brown's father.

'Mr. Brown, I believe?' said Herbert modestly, with his back against Brown's oak.

The florid man nodded; he was too out of breath to speak, and Herbert saw there was a shade of anxiety on his genial face as he looked over his shoulder at the closed door of his son's rooms.

'Would you mind stepping in here a minute?' Herbert went on nervously, opening the door of his own rooms.

'Is—is anything the matter?' Brown senior asked, his fresh-coloured face suddenly paling.

'No, not much; at least, not now,' Herbert answered awkwardly.

And then he shut the door upon him, and took him over to the window, and told him as gently and considerately as he could something—not all—about Brown's illness.

'It's these confounded examinations!' said Brown senior, with quite natural impatience. 'There is so much competition in these days, and so much is expected of a man, that it's no wonder some of them break down. He kept up until it was all over, you say, and then broke down. I'm not at all surprised!'

Herbert assured him with quite unnecessary warmth that Brown had kept up until the examination was *quite* over.

'You'll be very careful with him, sir; you will not let him get excited?' he said, as he followed Brown's fond parent to his son's door.

'Aye, aye!' said old Brown cheerfully; 'you may be sure I shall be careful.'

Half an hour later the door opened again, and Herbert saw father and son crossing the quad together, arm in arm, talking of the old time when Brown senior wore the gown of Trinity. He stopped in the middle of the court and pointed out his old rooms; and the tenant, who was wining with his friends, looked down superciliously upon him, and drew back abashed when he saw the light shining on the genial old face that was recalling its youthful days.

Herbert watched them till they entered the doorway that led to the tutor's rooms, and then he turned away with a groan.

Jayne saw them, too, from his garret, but he didn't groan: he went down on his knees instead, on a very worn strip of carpet by his bedside, and he asked the Kind Hand that is ever occupied with the affairs of man to—but what right have we to penetrate into that sacred presence-chamber?

We may be sure of one thing: he didn't ask in vain!

Half an hour later Brown and his father recrossed the Great Court. The fountain was playing, the sun was shining; but all the light had gone out of their changed faces, as they walked sadly, and apart, across the quad.

Herbert heard them stumble up the staircase, and the door of Brown's room shut.

He did not dare to go in. He knew exactly what had happened, as if he had been a witness of that interview in Mr. Routh's room. He saw the stern face of the tutor; he heard the cold, merciless words that fell from his thin lips as he poured out into the fond father's ears the story of his son's delinquencies: the old, old story of time wasted in aimless dissipation, folly, gambling, drunkenness, rioting, and—worst of all—in general defiance of the rules of the college.

Brown came in presently with a white and stricken face.

'It's all over, Flowers,' he said, with a quivering lip. 'I'm sent down. I'm rusticated!'

'Good heavens!' Herbert exclaimed; 'it's not so bad as that, surely?'

'It isn't that!' Brown said speaking thickly, with a sob in his

throat. 'I deserved all that ; but it has broken the dear old fellow's heart !'

He could not trust himself to say any more, and he turned away to hide the tears that were smarting in his eyes.

'Good-bye, old fellow, good-bye ! You'll see about my things ? I can't stay to pack 'em myself ; the others, I know, 'll help.'

'Of course I will,' said Herbert, and a nasty mist came before his eyes, and blotted Brown's homely figure quite out ; 'but you don't mean you are going away so quick ?'

'I must, to look after the governor. Poor old chap isn't fit to travel by himself.' And the tears in Brown's eyes brimmed over and ran down his white cheeks.

Herbert watched them crossing the court. The old man—who had aged tremendously in this *mauvais quart d'heure*—clung to Brown for support as he tottered across the quad with his head upon his breast, and all his honest pride and ambition dead within him.

There were none of Brown's friends pressing round to take leave of him as he went on his sorrowful way. Some choice spirits who were coming in the gateway, when they saw his melancholy figure, slunk away, and passed on the other side of the quad.

There was a sound Herbert well knew on the stones below, and Jayne was limping painfully after his retreating figure. He came up to him at the gate.

'God bless you, Brown !' he said, holding out his hand. 'Good-bye, old fellow ; God bless you !'

And so, with a benediction, Brown passed beneath the great gateway of Trinity.

Things went on pretty much as usual after Brown went down. His rustication was spoken of with wonder and awe for several days, and then he dropped out of men's minds.

The examinations were over, and preparations for May week were being made on every hand, and everybody was much too busy to think of Brown. Herbert had more time on his hands than most men : he had no examination until his Tripos—which was too far off to affect him yet—except, indeed, his college examinations, in which he took a very good place, and carried off some prizes nicely bound in russiâ leather and emblazoned with the college arms.

His place in the college boat had been given to another man since his accident, so his part would be on the bank in the May races. He didn't sing, so he was no good at the college concert, which was one of the most brilliant affairs of May week. He didn't dance, and he hadn't a guinea in the world to pay for a ticket for the ball that the men of Trinity were getting up ; and he couldn't entertain his friends, or other men's friends, on anything more sumptuous than a dry biscuit and coffee.

He hadn't any people coming up for the May week, like other

men. He hadn't any people, indeed, to come up, but the little mother, and she would have looked sadly out of place amid the gaily-dressed visitors who thronged the courts of Trinity, in her rusty silk gown that had done duty for best occasions so long as Herbert could remember.

No ; it wouldn't do for the little mother to come up—at least, not now.

He may have looked forward, in one of those day-dreams of his, to a proud and happy day—not for many terms yet—when Lucy would wear a bran-new silk gown, provided especially to do honour to the occasion, and would take her seat in that privileged row, with a smile of such supreme joy shining on her dear face that made his heart swell to think of.

Alas for dreams !

Other men's mothers sat there now. Other men's fathers, beside Brown's, complacently strolled through the busy courts, pointing out to their women folk the rooms they once occupied, the windows they once looked out of.

Gentle, kindly, dignified old fellows, with something of pride beaming on their faces, prowled about the hall and chapel reviving old memories, or went mousing about the staircases their footsteps had so often trod, to look at that familiar door where another name now appeared in white letters ; and mused on the landings of the generations of undergraduates that had since passed over that threshold, of the stormy youth who had disturbed the peace of that quiet staircase, while shadowy figures of their youth came crowding out of the past in all the freshness of their lusty manhood.

Geraint's people hadn't come up—he had begged them to wait until he took his degree next year, he told Herbert with a sigh. Jayne's aunt had come up, and he limped all over Cambridge with her, and showed her all the sights as conscientiously as if she were his cousin and in her teens. Cudworth's people had come up in a party, and he had no end of pretty sisters, whom the other men admired very much. Perhaps he did the same with regard to theirs, as he was heard to express a desire to exchange sisters with another man for a time, or for the May week, at least.

Spurway's people had run up from town for the May boat-races, and were staying at the Lodge. Herbert saw Lady Millicent's face in chapel, and it immediately brought before him a vision of the little mother. Not that they were the least alike ; but it reminded him of her servitude, and of the patient sacrifice that she was daily and hourly making for him in wearing her life out with those unruly children in the Bratton schoolroom.

He couldn't very well grind his heel into the floor of the chapel, as the Dean objected to noises ; but he looked very glum over his Prayer-book, and sang the surliest hymn he had ever sung in Trinity.

The sight of Muriel Spurway didn't soften his heart one whit,

nor the memory of that red rose she had given him, oh, ages ago ! It had gone the way of the roses of youth, and those early fires were all dead. The flame of that youthful love had gone completely out. Herbert remembered, with something of shame and humiliation, as he looked at her, across the surly hymn, in the stalls of the college chapel, that foolish passion that had once consumed him. The light had gone out of her bright eyes now—for him at any rate—and the elegantly attired woman of fashion, resplendent in the latest creation of Worth's, looked a very poor thing beside the Trinity Lily in her simple white muslin.

As he was coming out of chapel Geraint stopped him. He was crumpling up a little pink note in his hand, and his face was flushed, and he was biting his under-lip impatiently, a habit he had if anything annoyed him.

'Oh, Flowers,' he said, stopping him on the chapel-steps, 'I want you to take an oar to-morrow night ; I am taking some ladies up to Ditton. There will only be two of us ; will you come ?'

Herbert began to say he had promised to run with some other men on the bank beside his boat, and had pledged himself to ring a dinner-bell, or spring a rattle, or blow a horn, or do some other idiotic thing, by way of stimulating the crew at critical moments in the race.

'Oh, hang the dinner-bell ! You *must* come, Flowers ; it's no use saying you can't. The fact is, I promised the ladies to bring you.'

Herbert did not need to ask who were the ladies ; Geraint was still crumpling up the little pink note between his fingers.

'Did they really ask me ?' Herbert inquired, blushing furiously.

'Well, they told me to bring someone, and I knew they would like you. The fact is, there's a little secret in the matter. Hebe—that is, Miss Hebe Bellenden—hates Grinlay like Lucifer, and he has proposed to take them down the river, and he was so obliging as to mention my name as one of the party. Miss Bellenden has accepted his escort, and Hebe is fretting her pretty eyes out. It's deuced hard, that just for one day she can't have a respite from that confounded fellow ; and Geraint imitated Herbert's evil example, and ground his heel into the well-kept college gravel.

There was a corresponding light in Herbert's eyes, and his breath came quick.

'Yes,' he said eagerly.

'Well, I just propose to take the boat up half an hour before the time, and get the ladies in, and hang about the bank as if we were waiting for—for that devil, and you'll be at hand and slip in, and off we'll go before he and his confounded party come up.'

'But the ladies,' said Herbert ; 'will they be willing ?'

Geraint gave a low laugh.

'All right,' he said with a chuckle ; 'there'll be a row, and Miss Bellenden'll fume—and Hebe will have a holiday.'

His handsome face was flushed and eager, and a little tender smile played round his mouth.

'What do you say, Flowers?'

Herbert may have had that little business of Brown's weighing heavily on his mind, and was not sorry for an opportunity of relieving his feelings, so he gave up the pleasing manipulation of the dinner-bell with good grace.

There was the usual confusion on the bank on the first day of the May races, and the ladies were only five minutes late. Considering their toilettes, an hour would have been pardonable. There was a little sensation in the crowd as the belles of Cambridge came up to the landing-stage, and it parted involuntarily on either side to let them pass through to the bank.

Geraint sat alone in his boat serene and smiling—a noble type of the Cambridge undergraduate; a courageous, even-tempered, muscular giant, well-balanced and modest, but ready and prompt of action if need be.

He helped the ladies into the boat, and waited, paddling slowly along the bank, for Grinley.

Hebe took the rudder and steered like an experienced cox amid the craft that crowded the river. How lovely she looked in her light gauzy gown, with the sun lighting up the pale gold of her hair, and touching ever so tenderly her white, proud beauty, and the perfect lines of her perfect figure! Not that she was pale by any means to-day: there was a delightful flush on her cheeks—it might have been owing to the pink parasol she carried—and a light in her dark eyes that Herbert did not remember to have seen there before.

He walked along the bank, keeping up with the boat till they reached the corner, when, at a signal from Geraint, he got in.

'How late you are, Mr. Grinley!' Miss Bellenden began, and stopped. She didn't exactly turn white beneath her rou—her fixed colour; but the tone of her complexion altered, and she glared at Herbert with her hard bright eyes in a way that made him feel very creepy. Hebe Bellenden had expected somebody—anybody but Grinley—but she hadn't expected him, and she paled visibly beneath the very becoming pink of her sunshade.

It was not quite comfortable for Herbert, but he made the best of it, and pushed the boat off into the middle of the stream.

Of course there were explanations, but there was no scene, and a kind of wet blanket fell upon the party. Herbert did his modest best, but he was awfully uncomfortable. He had not met the Bellendens since that dreadful night. If they had forgotten it, he hadn't, and it kept coming up before him in the midst of that merry scene in the most trying way.

Hebe took no notice of him after the first five seconds, and Miss Bellenden glared at him severely with her magnificent eyes all the way up to Ditton, as if he were the culprit and not Geraint.

Her other attractions were discreetly veiled from the sunshine, but Herbert had the satisfaction of making two discoveries—first, that the fixed colour on her cheek was quite independent of nature; and second, that her shining teeth were false; and accident revealed this to him in a flash, and he blushed quite guiltily at the discovery.

There could be no doubt about her arms—her beautiful white arms, that were shown to perfection in the tight well-fitting sleeve of her Surah gown. Herbert caught himself looking at them, by a strange kind of fascination; and remembered when he had last seen them bared, carrying that awful burden.

Grinley passed them when they were drawn up at Ditton, and found a place for his boat about a dozen boats off. He gave no sign of annoyance at Geraint's little manoeuvre beyond a slight elevation of his eyebrows as he passed the party rowing calmly up the stream. There were two men with him in the boat, a smart one, with crimson cushions for the ladies. Herbert didn't know the men, except by reputation: they were Magdalen men, and one of them had the enviable reputation of spending five thousand a year in Cambridge, against the ordinary undergraduate's five hundred.

Hebe smiled as the boat passed, and exchanged a meaning glance with Geraint, and the elder Miss Bellenden bit her beautiful red under-lip. She had preserved a stony silence since the little explanation, and when the boats were drawn in she signified her desire to land.

The grass at Ditton Corner wasn't exactly like velvet, and the landing didn't improve the ladies' gowns—or their tempers.

Geraint helped Hebe out first, and he gave Herbert a look which he quite understood as he essayed to help Miss Bellenden across the bridge of boats. It is never an easy affair to get across to the land, and the situation can be prolonged at will.

Herbert prolonged it until Geraint and his companion were quite out of sight, and then, seeing a pink parasol some distance ahead, he plunged into the crowd and led Miss Bellenden a cheerful dance in pursuit of it in quite an opposite direction.

When they came up to the parasol, the owner was not Hebe Bellenden, but an older friend of Herbert's, Muriel Spurway, and between her and Lady Millicent the Etonian was walking lugubriously, looking as if he would very much like to exchange sisters with somebody.

Herbert blushed, as was his wont, and bowed to the ladies, and Miss Bellenden consoled herself by making enquiries about the Etonian and his people. The foolish fellow was so glad of any excuse to avert her wrath, and to keep her out of Geraint's way, that he answered all her questions quite effusively. He even remembered afterwards that he had taken some trouble to calculate the exact number of acres the Spurways owned in North Devon,

and the approximate amount of Sir Hugh's rent-roll ; and that he had assured her that the estate was wholly unencumbered.

While he was yet eloquent in his description of the wealth and beauty of that great estate on the banks of the Torridge that would one day be Tom Spurway's, they came across Grinley. Miss Bellenden spoke a few words to him in a low voice, and as she spoke Herbert saw an ugly look come into his eyes, but not a muscle of his face changed.

'I have just met your sister,' he said quite sweetly ; 'she is with our friend Geraint, under the tree ; they have been looking for you everywhere.'

He stooped down over Miss Bellenden's white bonnet as he finished speaking, and the rest of the sentence only reached that lady's private ear.

'I think I'll get back to the boat,' Herbert muttered awkwardly. It was not a delightful position, and he had no wish to intrude upon Miss Bellenden's secrets.

One never exactly cares to be made a cat's-paw of, even in the interest of one's friends, and he strode back through the crowd to the boat.

He had not sat there long before Geraint came up, looking as black as night. He was alone.

'Yes,' he said gloomily, with language expressive of his feelings, 'they have taken her away. She didn't exactly go easy, but that fellow Grinley has some power over her I can't understand. By Jove ! you should have seen her eyes flash when he put out his hand to help her into his confounded boat. I didn't know there was such a devil in her !'

'Did she go with him, after all ?' Herbert asked.

His heart was beating, and he would very much have liked to have had Grinley within reach of his arm—all other things, of course, being equal.

'Go with him ?' said Geraint with a groan. 'Miss Bellenden managed that. She just whispered something that I couldn't catch to her, and she stepped quietly into the boat ; but she never touched the fellow's hand when he offered to help her, and she drew away her gown as she passed him with nothing short of loathing that was quite superb ! Poor little Hebe ! I'd give something to know the secret of that fellow's influence over her.'

Herbert smiled drearily. He could have thrown some light upon it, maybe, but his tongue was tied.

CHAPTER XIII.

JULIE.

LIKE Dr. Whewell, when he scored his first great University success, Herbert conceived it necessary to get a new suit of clothes in which to appear at the Senate-house and recite his Latin hexameters before the Vice-Chancellor and the University.

He didn't at all see the way to pay for it, and, with Brown's awful example before his eyes, he ordered it of a smart Cambridge tailor in much fear and trepidation.

The Senate-house was crowded—at least, the galleries were—with noisy undergraduates, and in the body of the hall the sweet girl undergraduates of Girton and Newnham listened to the inflated Latin and rhythmic Greek 'as she is now spoke.'

The most gratifying circumstance attending a success is the pleasure it gives one's friends. But there were no dear ones to share in Herbert's exultation, there was no proud, glad, tender face to greet him as he mounted the rostrum, and blushed above his bands when he turned over the leaves of his prize-poem.

Lilian Howell and Muriel Spurway were there beside the wife of the Master of Trinity, and Jayne was in the gallery just above him.

He was quite sure of his sympathy, and it helped him through his task. If there were a hundred voices cheering him when he stepped modestly up to the dais to receive the gold medal at the hands of the Vice-Chancellor, he only heard one, and that was the voice of Jayne. His eyes were as unreliable as his ears. When he stepped out of the gloom of the Senate-house into the bright noon-day sunshine of King's Parade, he was conscious of having seen an indistinct ring of faces, and the sober background of the walls and the windows, and the shadows lurking in the corners, but only one face stood out among them all—the face of Lilian Howell. Muriel Spurway was in the outer ring, and she was the best-dressed woman in the Senate-house!

There was nothing further to keep him up in Cambridge, so he packed his books and his scanty wardrobe—he left the new suit behind—and shook hands with his friends, and went down by a very slow Parliamentary train to Bideford.

He took the gold medal, and the handsome volumes emblazoned with the arms of Trinity, that he had won in his college examinations, down to the little mother at Bideford.

He paid another visit to the Senate-house before he went down. He went to see the men in the honours-list take their degrees. The pleasant voice of praise had already whetted his appetite for fame, and it only wanted the scene in the Senate-house on that memorable day to fire his ambition. He stood in the undergraduates' gallery looking down on the brave scene below. The Vice-Chancellor

in his robes, the Dons in their scarlet gowns, the pretty girls in the gallery behind smiling down, the honours men in their fur hoods smiling up—was he moved by these foolish things, or was it the glory for its own sake that moved him so deeply? The Chancellor's gold medal was all that he had to show Lucy of his University successes for the year. He had a few flimsy documents with printed headings, bearing a variety of cabalistic characters, the contemplation of which did not give him wholly unmixed satisfaction, but these he did not show her. He crushed them into a drawer of his writing-table, and turned the key upon them, which is a very easy way to get rid of one's troubles.

The little mother was very glad to see him, and folded him tremblingly, this tall, handsome giant that he had grown, to her tender heart.

She crept in when he was asleep once more in his own little room beneath the eaves, to steal a long look at him and satisfy her hungry eyes.

It was not the manly down on his lip that betokened the subtle change that had come over the artless, impetuous Herbert of the old happy days, but an intangible shadow had come between the widow and her son, and that warned her, only too surely, that she no longer held the first place in her boy's heart—the first place in his life.

Yet it was, in spite of the shadow, the happiest vacation that Lucy could remember. She had her boy once again all to herself. They spent a long happy month at Clovelly; and, climbing together the steep village street, or rambling on the shore, with the blue waves of the Severn Sea breaking at their feet, Lucy recalled the freedom and confidence of the old days when they were all the world to each other.

He was all the world to her still, but his world had widened, and she was no longer the central figure in it.

He did not tell her much about his illness; he had had an accident on the water—all men have accidents. He did not tell her anything about the bedmaker's ghost; he had changed his rooms—all men change their rooms.

There was a time, not so long ago, when he would have told her every little incident and event in his life, and been sure of her interest and sympathy. He was sure of it now, but he needed it no longer.

He was learning, as all the young birds do in time, to fly alone, and soon he would return to the parent nest no more; and oh, the loneliness of the solitary watcher whose chiefest solace is to recall the noisy, troublesome days when the nest was full!

The days of that short summer holiday were winged—golden days to be remembered and dwelt upon by the widow in her solitude; fond tender memories of perfect love and unshaken confidence in her dreary calendar.

The sweet eyes were sadder now, with a wistful look in them, and the bright hair was faded, Herbert remarked, with a sudden fear at his heart, as he watched her in the critical sunshine on the shore.

Her brief holiday over, Lucy returned to her teaching up at the great house, and with gloomy impatience he noted how languid and weary she was after these long tiresome lessons, and how drooping and bent the little active figure, that used to climb so briskly the steep hill that led to Bratton Court.

He would groan within himself, and swear that she should go up there no more, and grind his heel into the little worn hearthrug—there was a hole in it now, and Lucy was too weary to mend it—in his impotence to prevent it. What could he offer as a substitute for the welcome guineas that daily teaching brought into the widow's slender purse? His sizarship was insufficient for his own wants; and there was that cursed roll of flimsy paper that he had stuffed into the drawer of his writing-table—the Nemesis that was awaiting him.

He wore his patched clothes with becoming resignation, because it was the little mother's patient fingers that patched them. That long bill of the Cambridge tailor's, that he had crushed up in his hand unread, was for club blazers and flannels, and the indispensables of an athlete's wardrobe. He had brought none of the glories of the University clubs to dazzle the eyes of the simple West-Country folk; he had locked them up in a shamefaced sort of way in his rooms in Trinity. The little mother would be asking all sorts of awkward questions about them, so it was quite as well he left them behind.

His club blazer would have been a glorious object in the sunshine on the broad bosom of the Torridge, but he modestly left that behind too; but he wore an old Cambridge cap with the well-known colours of the boating club, that was much too weather-stained an affair to provoke inquiry.

Tom Sparway, who, since that memorable day when Herbert won his cups, had ceased to 'confound the beggar's impudence,' often condescended to paddle with him between the green hills and the yellow sand-banks, arrayed in the fearful and wonderful striped garments in which the youths of Trinity are wont to disport themselves.

This pleasing spectacle invariably drew an admiring spectator to the shore. Julie always found on these occasions an opportunity of bringing her young charges for a walk on the bank of the swift-flowing Torridge that skirted the grounds of Bratton Court.

A change, an imperceptible change to most men, had come over the fair young *gouvernante* since Herbert had seen her last. He could not say in what it lay, he felt it rather than saw it; still it puzzled him, and he studied the pretty, foolish moth, that was so eager to burn itself in any candle that came in its way, as a

serious problem, none the less interesting for being human and pretty.

She was ever so much prettier than of old, to begin with. Her cheeks were pinker ; her skin was whiter ; her large, soft, untrustable eyes were darker and larger, and curiously heightened by an artistic bit of colouring beneath. Her fine bushy brows were delicately pencilled, and her hair—well, here description fails ; it was necessary to see Julie's coiffure to appreciate it.

Added to all these charms of person, she was no longer down at heel, and my lady's ill-fitting old gowns no longer concealed the delightful contour of her *mignon* figure.

Julie had taken her charms in hand, and was making the most of them for the benefit of the foolish undergraduates.

She had the field all to herself, and was free to use her powder and her patchouli, without any fear of Lady Millicent's displeasure.

Her ladyship and Miss Muriel were still in Scotland ; and Mr. Tom Spurway had run down alone to Bratton for a little shooting before he went back to Cambridge.

He offered Herbert a gun, but the poor sizar had not the money to pay for a license. He went up to the tennis-court as of old, and came across his old enemy the peacock, who remembered him quite well, and greeted him with his accustomed urbanity.

Herbert did not throw a stone at him, neither did he go up the back stairs. He refused altogether to enter the house ; but he was willing enough to play tennis, as of old, with his fellow undergraduate and Julie and the children.

He was very often up at the house during the closing weeks of the long vacation, and would wait on the lawn, or in the shrubbery, to walk back with the tired little mother when her weary day's work was over. Julie would sometimes go with them, and stay at the widow's cottage until it was quite late, and the early dusk of the autumn evenings had fallen, when Herbert could do no less than walk back to the house with her.

The stately old housekeeper of Bratton, who was as formidable a person, in her way, as my lady herself, opened the door to her once or twice, when she had stayed later than usual, and rebuked the giddy little governess for being out so late in no measured terms.

She looked with disfavour upon Herbert, whom the timid little creature could not let go until the door was opened, and the foolish fellow would stride angrily away, mortified at the woman's insolence, and vowing that he would never set foot in the place again, only to be brought back the very next night, an hour later, at Julie's apron-strings—an unwilling chevalier ; but who could let such a timid creature return through those autumn woods alone ?

It was a wet, lowering morning when Herbert returned to Cambridge. The gray, sullen clouds hung over the hills, and the tide came in hoarsely, with low, angry mutterings, as it lashed the piers

of the old bridge over the Torridge, as Herbert passed over it on his way to the station.

He would not let the little mother go with him. It was an unkindly morning, and she was weak and low-spirited, and would be sure to break down, as she always did, when she parted with him.

He had reached the little garden-gate, where the tall hollyhocks were dropping great tears on his path, and the brown-eyed sunflowers were sadly watching him over the wall, when some impulse made him turn back.

The little mother was standing in the porch waving her tender adieux, and he caught her in his arms with the old impulsive affection of his childhood.

His conscience was pricking him for his unworthiness of this unselfish love that was so freely sacrificing itself for him, and the memory of those crumpled bills pressed hard upon him.

'God bless you, mamsy!' he said, with a sob in his throat. 'I am an ungrateful beggar! Forgive me if I have been selfish! Whatever happens, you will never lose faith in me?'

His voice shook, and a mist came before his eyes; he was thinking of those wretched bills.

The little mother's arms were around him, and her tears were falling on his face.

'My darling, whatever happens, I shall never lose faith in you!'

He kissed her, and shouldered his bag, and waved his adieux as the turn of the road hid her from his sight.

'What did he mean by such a question?' she asked herself many times during that sad day.

She did not feel equal to going up to the great house until the afternoon, and there a surprise awaited her. Julie had flown.

The demure little governess had left her patroness without a word of notice or warning, and the delighted children were kicking up their heels in the schoolroom in playful expression of their entire satisfaction and approval of the unlooked-for event.

Julie had taken but little luggage with her—only, indeed, a small handbag containing her few personal trinkets. Her wardrobe, or rather my lady's wardrobe, lay piled up in a heap on the floor of her room.

All the old gowns and faded finery that her ladyship had given her were spread out upon the floor, piled in an untidy heap, and crowned with old shoes and artificial flowers, and on the top an ill-written scrawl was pinned:

'MY LADY,

'I return you all your old gowns and left-offs. I have need of them no longer,

'JULIE.'

'What does it mean?' asked Lucy of the stately housekeeper, who had taken her into the girl's room.

Her face was ashen white, and her voice was unsteady as she spoke.

'It means,' said the housekeeper grimly, 'that the little minx has gone off with your son, Mrs. Flowers!'

CHAPTER XIV.

'WHILE THE GRASS GROWS.'

'Another name was on the door.'

OCTOBER term, and Cambridge was full of fresh young faces.

Herbert felt quite old as he looked at them. His freshman's year was over, and he did not need his glass to tell him that he was not the same artless undergraduate who had looked into it twelve short months ago.

He had done many things in the time to account for the change that he saw there: he had grown a moustache, in its incipient stage, for one; he had earned a highly-coveted University distinction, and won some college prizes—things seldom gained without leaving some mark behind. Success leaves its stamp as well as failure.

The young, fresh faces that filled the courts would all undergo that same mysterious change by and-by. They would all grow finer or coarser as the master they served set his stamp upon them.

Herbert had gone up higher in chapel, and sat at another table in Hall, but he had still two whole years before him before he could lighten the load the little mother's frail shoulders had to bear. The grass took such a long time to grow!

He was always reminding himself of that whisper he had heard in the woods of Bratton: 'Wait a minute.' It had seemed to have a prophetic meaning to him then; but he was already getting tired of waiting, the minutes were so long.

Sometimes he was tempted, like the old Master of St. John's, to pack up his few belongings and steal away under the cover of the night.

He was out of place here, he told himself, among rich men. He was not even, with the most rigorous economy, and with many painful shifts and humiliations, able to keep out of debt. Clearly it was his duty to go.

The old Master had thought the same when he shouldered his pack and crept out of the gateway of his college under cover of the darkness of the night. Dick Whittington had, no doubt, many similar visions of perplexity and unfitness when he stole away in the early dawn; but they both went back, or were brought back, and very humbly and patiently trod the thorny path, that by-and-by led them to great distinction and honour.

Herbert didn't get even so far as the gate of Trinity. He sat behind his oak working all day with a desperate earnestness, deny-

ing himself his accustomed run in Fenner's before breakfast, and his spell on the river in the afternoon, and he burnt the midnight oil with a reckless disregard of his own health and his powers of endurance.

The other men of his staircase expostulated with him in vain. Geraint made one or two ineffectual attempts to carry him off to the Bellendens', and Jayne almost succeeded in taking him to Barnwell.

He did go there sometimes to bring Jayne back ; but he never helped in the work.

'It wasn't in his line,' he explained very modestly ; 'perhaps he should see his way clearer by-and-by.'

There was a new tenant in Brown's rooms, and a new name painted in white letters over Brown's door. How many times had a new name been painted over that door ?

It was a name very familiar to Herbert—a name that he had heard from his cradle spoken with a certain awe ; but he would rather have seen Brown's there.

Tom Spurway had changed his rooms this October term, and come over to Herbert's staircase, and his name greeted him every time he opened his own door.

Perhaps this was why he kept his oak so persistently sported.

It was not Spurway's fault that they were not better friends. He treated the poor sizar with quite condescending affability. He did him the honour the first day he came up to borrow his inkstand, his own having been broken in transit. Herbert carried the silver inkstand, with the long Latin inscription, across the landing with a little swelling of pardonable pride. The old coach had been a Fellow of Trinity, and the Spurways had been Squires of Bratton unto the tenth generation—mighty Nimrods in their way, but never a scholar or a divine among them.

Nor did Spurway's condescension end here. His bedmaker having omitted to order his groceries, he did Herbert the favour of borrowing his tea and sugar, and coffee and squish—otherwise marmalade—and other little domestic items, as long as the poor fellow's cupboard held out.

He even condescended to borrow Herbert's gold stud, having broken his own and lost the key of his dressing-case.

The bedmaker conscientiously hesitated before going on this errand.

'Mr. Flowers has only got one, sir, and he's a-wearin' it hisself,' she remonstrated.

'Oh, never mind,' shouted the condescending youth ; 'let him take it out. Tell him I'm going to a concert.'

And Herbert did take it out, and appeared at the college concert in the Guildhall with a black, beady thing of Jayne's in his bosom.

Tom Spurway always noticed him affably on the staircase, and in the quads, if none of his own set happened to be in sight, and sat

near him in chapel, and elbowed him in Hall ; but beyond the gate of Trinity he didn't know him.

One must draw a line somewhere, and the heir of Bratton drew it at Trinity Gateway.

A great many distinctions have been drawn at that fine old gateway ; they are being drawn, indeed, every day. There is a wide entrance of noble proportions for the many, and a narrow doorway of mean dimensions to admit the few.

Tom Spurway was an elegantly attired youth, and the *chefs d'œuvre* of the Bond Street tailor fitted to perfection his handsome undergraduate person, and his French boots were the shiniest in Trinity. The flower in his button-hole cost half a crown every morning, and the pretty maiden who pinned it in his coat, it was rumoured, charged half a crown extra for her trouble.

Herbert, with his turned coat, with those tell-tale marks in the seams, and his poor worn boots down at heel, and his patched trousers, was no fitting companion for the gentleman-commoner who lounged—the centre of an admiring group—down King's Parade.

There were few other undergraduates who wore highlows and no straps, and Berlin gloves, at Trinity, whose coats were white at the seams, and shiny at the shoulders. Jayne's were very often ; he had no money to spend upon himself—he wanted it all for Barnwell. He and Herbert usually took their short afternoon grind together on the Trumpington Road, and were snubbed—with becoming humility—by the magnificent youth who exhibited the latest fashions in that favoured locality.

Herbert was so ridiculously proud and sensitive that he blushed like a girl when Spurway ignored his nod of recognition one day when they met, each surrounded by his own party of friends. He never did it again, for Herbert never gave him the chance.

The heir of Bratton, to do him justice, made amends the very same night by sending his gyp across the landing, with a very polite message, to borrow Herbert's lamp, as he had knocked over his own. He was always knocking over something, or losing something, which enabled him to lay an obligation on the men of his staircase by borrowing their china, and books, and groceries, and forgetting—like a nobleman—to return them.

Herbert sent across his lamp, and took his books upstairs into Jayne's room, to do his work by the light of his lamp. He might have saved himself the trouble. The lamp certainly was there, well trimmed and reflecting itself in Jayne's shining mahogany, which was uncovered, and innocent of books, papers, or any working litter.

The kettle was singing on the hob, and a tray, with cups and saucers and a big coffee-pot, stood on a side-table, and Jayne was cutting up a cake.

'My dear fellow,' he said, 'this is an unexpected pleasure.'

Herbert looked at the festive preparations, and prepared to retreat.

'Fact is,' he explained, 'I didn't know you were expecting anyone. I had come up to work.'

Jayne got between him and the door.

'Exactly,' he said; 'and your work is here. I have been asking God for the last hour to send someone to help me, and He has sent you.'

Jayne had such very old-fashioned notions about answers to prayer, and he was always upsetting his friends by declaring that some quite every-day event was a special interposition of Providence.

'I have some boys coming,' he explained, 'members of my night-class. I am going to give them some coffee and talk to them, and I am sure you have got a message for them too.'

It was too late for Herbert to draw back. There was a sound of clumsy, shuffling footsteps on the stairs, and a number of boys from Barnwell were crowding the landing outside Jayne's door.

He didn't wait for them to knock, but stood in the entry with a beaming face and invited them in.

They came in awkwardly, and stood in knots till he found them places, and Herbert did good work in carrying round the coffee that Jayne dispensed. The cake held out wonderfully, so did the sugar. The sugar-basin wasn't lost on this occasion, in the midst of the feast, as it had been at another 'coffee' that Herbert remembered in those very rooms, with oh! so much shame and humiliation.

The boys from Barnwell behaved lovely, having, after repeated efforts, succeeded in finding convenient places for their superfluous arms and legs. The business of the evening began by the lads drawing up around Jayne's shining mahogany, and bringing out their Bibles—not at all sheepishly, but with quite delightful pride.

They were Bibles to be proud of—well bound and good print—and they made quite a handsome show upon the table against Jayne's little well-worn volume that he took from an inner pocket. They were Geraint's gift, he afterwards explained to Herbert, and this was the first public occasion of using them.

Reading aloud is not the especial forte of Barnwell, but with Jayne's help they got through their verses very creditably. He stopped them once, when there was a good deal of shuffling of feet going on, and reminded them that there might be someone reading below, and dwelt for a moment on that especial Christian obligation—which may have been new to some of them—of considering the feelings of others.

There was no more scraping of feet, and when he delivered his brief address you might have heard a pin drop. And then he asked Herbert to speak.

Herbert had never spoken in his life in public. He had never

addressed any larger meeting than the sixth-form of his school at Bideford, and then he had something definite to say. But he stood up and looked round on the expectant faces. What could he say to them? He remembered their poor homes, and their hard lives, and the work that lay before them in the world, and then he spoke a few very plain, simple words to them on Christian manliness.

When his tongue was once loosed he could speak freely enough to such a humble audience. He had been, and was still, indeed, poor enough himself to descend the social ladder and meet these ignorant lads half-way. He didn't venture to talk to them, as the men of Trinity were fond of talking in the Union Debating Club, of the evils of intemperance, overcrowding, insufficient education, and inadequate codes of religion and morality. But he told them if they were willing to educate themselves he would help them and he would give up an evening a week to them."

And so, without Jayne's solicitation, he had pledged himself to work in Barnwell.

He went downstairs after the boys, who, remembering their lesson, stole quietly out and crossed the quad with stealthy footsteps. On the staircase he met Grinley going into Spurway's room. As he opened the door, Herbert saw, by the light of his own lamp on Spurway's table, a number of men playing cards, who hailed Grinley's entrance with a shout.

He nodded to Herbert, and asked him if he were coming in; he held the door open long enough for him to see that Geraint, and Cudworth, and the other man on the staircase were there, but Spurway had not invited him.

He shook his head and went into his dusky room. By the light of the fire he saw a letter lying on his table, and, searching about, he found a candle to read it by.

'It was from Brown, and with the shouts of the men who were playing cards in the room opposite in his ears, he read Brown's letter:

'DEAR OLD MAN,' it began in Brown's small uncertain handwriting, 'You will see by the address that I am still at home, and with no prospect, so far as I can see, of getting anything to do. My father and mother are goodness itself. They have never in any form reproached me, or shown that they are disappointed in me, and God knows they must be!

'The governor has been trying to get me into a bank; but the manager says, with his long list of applicants, he can hardly promise me an opening if I wait years for it. Then there has been some talk of my emigrating to America, to a cousin of my mother's. Fancy me a farmer in the States!

'Smith, who gave such famous wines, and was sent down absolutely a few days before I was (Routh promised not to explain more than was necessary to his governor, the reason being that he

went to Newmarket, and stayed out till 1.30 with an absit), has gone, I hear, to Australia. He was a scholar, you remember, and would have taken a first for certain, and very likely got a Fellowship, and now he's roughing it in the bush!

'It seems awfully hard that a little thoughtless folly, no real guilt or wilful crime, should alter the whole course of a fellow's life, and that no second chance should be given him!'

'When I think it over. I cannot believe I have done anything bad enough to cause my expulsion. I am sometimes tempted to write to the Dean; you know he was always very kind, and I treated him beastly, and ask him to get Routh to give me another chance. My pride rather revolts against it, but I think Thorpe would, if he looked at that ring of his: you know the story.'

'Would you mind speaking to him? Remember a fellow has only *one* life, *one* chance.'

'Yours, dear fellow, to a cinder, 'DICK.'

'P.S.—The governor knows nothing about that horrible bill, and Grinley has got the man to renew it.'

As Herbert finished Brown's letter, Geraint came in, and they talked it over together.

'It is deuced hard on a fellow,' said Geraint meditatively. 'It's rough on Brown; he isn't nearly so bad as half the fellows here, and yet he gets sent down for an example to the rest, and ruined for life. Why, that fellow Spurway over there has lost more money to-night at cards than Brown has lost all his life. He has been gambling every night since he came up; he has got into the Bellendens' set; and here he groaned and kicked a big coal in the grate into a hundred splinters.'

'He'll stand a good deal of bleeding,' said Herbert bitterly.

'So he may; but a fellow can't go on for ever. Grinley's got him hard and fast. He was at Newmarket with him the other day, and he didn't get back till after midnight. I've been there with Grinley myself, and I know what that means. And he keeps a mistress at Linton, and she drives about Cambridge in his dog-cart; she was at Newmarket with him.'

'A mistress?' said Herbert, looking up with a sudden interest in his tone. 'Have you seen her? What's she like?'

'Yes, I have seen her: she was at the football match the other day. Grinley introduced her, and she was at the theatre in the evening, with a lot of fellows round her. She isn't at all shy of appearing in public.'

'You have not told me what she's like,' said Herbert impatiently.

'Like! Oh, a little foreign thing—all eyes and a fringe.'

'You say Grinley was with her. Is he smitten, too?' And Herbert laughed a low laugh.

'Grinley smitten? Never fear; it's one of his moves. He's

as cold-blooded as a fish ; but I don't see exactly what he's driving at.'

'I—I thought,' said Herbert, blushing at his temerity, that he was smitten in another direction—that he was in love with the youngest Miss Bellenden.'

Geraint looked up with a sudden flush on his face, and made a fierce attack on Herbert's fire.

'Yes,' he said savagely, 'He will marry her some day, I suppose, if——' but he didn't finish the sentence.

'If the lady is willing?' Herbert suggested presently.

'Willing be hanged!' he answered with an oath. 'Hebe will never be willing. She may be forced into it; I believe she will be; but she will never be willing. He has a hold upon her, like he seems to get upon everybody, and she can't throw him off. Such fellows ought not to be let loose upon society without being labelled "dangerous."'

'Why doesn't he marry Miss Bellenden?' Herbert suggested.

Geraint laughed.

'Oh, she's an old University hack. She has been engaged to be married to no end of fellows in her day, and got damages out of some of 'em. Oxford got too hot for her, so she came here. When Cambridge won't hold her longer, and I fancy she has been putting on the screw too strong lately, she'll turn 'up in Dublin, or some other place where there are innocents abroad.'

'And Hebe?' Herbert asked, more with his eyes than his tongue.

'Oh, she's in the same boat. She's lived upon blackmail all her life; she's been trained to it, and she beats 'em all in it. She belongs to the devil, body and soul, unless—unless——'

Geraint did not finish his sentence, but sat with the poker in hand driving at the back of Herbert's fireplace, till he broke it in half in his hands.

'Oh, I am so sorry,' he said ruefully, looking at the two damaged ends.

'Oh, never mind,' said Herbert ; 'but you didn't finish what you were saying—"unless"?''

'Unless I am a fool and a villain!'

And Geraint rose from his seat. The solitary candle had gone out, and the fire had burnt low, and he stumbled over the furniture in the dark to the door.

CHAPTER XV.

A PRETTY HORSE-BREAKER.

HERBERT sent his commons down to Geraint's room the next morning, and while they were at breakfast a letter was brought in.

It did not need the faint, suggestive perfume, or the delicate familiar hand, to tell who the little pink note was from. Geraint's

heightened colour told its own tale. He threw down the note impatiently, with an oath, when he had read it.

'By Jove!' he exclaimed, with an angry flush on his face, 'that's too bad! Grinley proposes to take that little foreign creature of Spurway's to the Bellendens', and Miss Bellenden has promised to receive her. Hebe's furious!'

'I should think so,' said Herbert. 'What's his motive?'

'An infernal one, you may be sure!' And Geraint pushed away his breakfast untasted, and went over to the window. 'If it were not for—for—well, for one thing, I'd take her out of it. Oh, Flowers, I'm the most miserable wretch in the world!'

The confession was such an unexpected one, and the poor fellow's attitude was so utterly wretched, as he threw himself into a chair, with his face buried in his hands, that Herbert got up and came over to him.

'It's not so bad as that, old fellow!' he said encouragingly.

'It's about as bad as it can be,' said Geraint with a groan. 'I've half a mind to tell *you all about* it. It's wearing me to death.'

'If it will be any relief for you to tell me,' said Herbert modestly—'I'm sure if I can do anything.'

'Do anything? It's past that. No one can do anything, unless they put a bullet through me. Sometimes I think that would be the shortest way.'

'Hush!' said Herbert gravely.

He was thinking of that other man, and it sent an involuntary shiver through him.

'It's all very well for you, who have never known a real passion in your life, to say hush! The fact is, Flowers. I'm Hebe Bellenden's slave, and I'm engaged to marry another woman.'

'I'm very sorry,' said Herbert simply.

'And that isn't all,' said Geraint moodily; 'but she is the best and noblest woman in the world. She's too good for any man, and—and—I'm throwing her over wilfully, with my eyes open, for—for—well, you know, Hebe Bellenden; and she isn't exactly the woman you would like your wife to be, is she, Flowers?'

'No!' said Herbert emphatically.

'Exactly; yet I have asked her to marry me. And as soon as I have taken my degree I intend to make her my wife. You must be my best man, Flowers. I must wait for my degree, for probably I shall have to get my own living. My father will, most likely, disinherit me, and we shall go abroad.'

'Does Hebe Bellenden know this?' Herbert asked gravely.

'No,' said Geraint sadly; 'she will never know what she has cost me. You have no idea of my father's pride and ambition for me, Flowers. I was to take his seat for the county; and our place in the North—it's been in the family since the Tudors—was to have been rebuilt, and Mary Barclay, the girl I am engaged to marry, has a million of money.'

'I am very sorry,' was all Herbert could say.

He was very sorry, and he went mooting about all the rest of the day without any heart for his work. It might have been his own case. He was half in love with Hebe Bellenden already, and a little encouragement would have fanned the spark into a flame.

And if she had encouraged him?

He was quite afraid to answer that question, and grew quite warm in a very draughty corner of his room at the possible result. He always chose the coldest seat in the room to work in. Nothing like cold feet and a draught for reading.

'No,' he told himself, 'there was no seat for the county, and no Mary Barclay waiting for him; but Hebe Bellenden wasn't exactly the wife he should like to present to the little mother.'

He put up his books and went for a long grind round Grantchester. His nerves were too shaken to accommodate himself to Jayne's halting footsteps, and he swung along at a good five miles an hour, with a stout ash stick he had cut in the hedge at Bideford for his companion.

Turning sharply round a curve in the road, he came across a smart dogcart, with a pair of high-stepping thoroughbreds. The driver was a lady, and, as the sight was an unusual one, he turned round and looked after her.

The figure certainly was familiar, and the pose of the head, with the jaunty little hat, he seemed to know quite well. The lady was alone, except a smart groom on the back seat, and she drove with a magnificent recklessness that did not betoken familiarity with the ribbons.

Herbert did not recognise her, but somehow she carried his mind back to his home and the woods around Bratton.

As he mounted his staircase Geraint shouted to him from beneath, and he came down. A pink note was lying open on the table, and he was white with rage.

'Hallo!' said Herbert, 'what's up?'

'What's up?' repeated Geraint slowly, but his lip was quivering with anger. 'I'll tell you what's up. If it had happened to have been Grinley instead of you going up those stairs I should have kicked him down them; I should have punished his beauty in a way that he wouldn't be likely to forget.'

'Almost a pity it wasn't,' said Herbert sympathetically.

He was thinking of Brown.

'If he had any pluck in him I'd call him out,' said Geraint; 'but he'd be sure to sneak out of it, and I should only get sent down.'

'You haven't told me what he's done?'

'Yes, I have; I told you last night. He got Miss Bellenden to promise to receive that—that female of Spurway's, and to-day she has called—drove herself over in a dogcart—and Hebe has been forced to receive her.'

Herbert whistled. That was the—the female he had met on the Trumpington Road.

‘Think of my wife receiving that—that woman!’

Geraint was quite white with passion, and there was a dangerous look in his frank eyes.

‘Why didn’t she refuse?’ said Herbert bluntly.

‘Aye, that’s the question! Why didn’t she? She’s got plenty of pluck, and when her spirit’s once up she’s a very devil; but Grinley and her sister have got some hold upon her which I can’t understand. There is only one chance for her: to take her away from them.’

‘Is she willing?’

‘No, she is not willing, unless I can take her away to some place where they can never follow her. It is not an easy or a delightful thing to wed Hebe Bellenden. It means giving up everything one values—home, friends, country, and leading the life of a vagabond and a fugitive.’

Herbert’s eyes asked a question his lips dared not frame.

‘Is the game worth the candle? It would not be to most men; but it is to me. She is my fate,’ and Geraint walked to the window and looked gloomily across the quad.

‘What will you do?’ Herbert asked presently.

‘I—I shall see Grinley, and probably I shall horsewhip him.’

Geraint saw Grinley that very night in Spurway’s rooms, but he didn’t horsewhip him.

‘Well?’ said Herbert, when he came out.

He had rather expected high words, and he had left his door ajar in case he should be wanted. Spurway had been out while Geraint had his little explanation, and was now coming leisurely up the stairs, accompanied by some of his friends.

‘Are you coming in?’ he bawled out to Geraint, but the other shook his head and went into Herbert’s room.

‘Well, you haven’t horsewhipped him?’

‘No, I wish I had. The fellow’s condescended to explain; there’s some confounded mystery. There always is a mystery with Grinley, and, as it isn’t my business, I can’t pretend to fathom it. The upshot is that Hebe will have to receive Madam Spurway till I can take her out of it.’

Herbert saw the lady and the dogcart in Cambridge the following day. Everybody saw her, indeed. She was driving more carefully, but with a certain audacious manner that drew all eyes upon her. Jayne was with him, turning over some books outside a noted bookshop at a busy corner in Sidney Street, as she passed. To his wonder and surprise she nodded to him, and he found himself blushing guiltily, and bowing to her before the eyes of all Cambridge.

There could be no doubt about it now. It was Julie! Julie the

demure, reared in a convent, and nurtured amid the woods of Bratton, metamorphized into a pretty horse-breaker!

Herbert didn't know for a moment whether he were more shocked or surprised.

He had heard from the little mother that Julie had left quite suddenly. This much she told him; not, perhaps, without a scornful word or two about the manœuvring little *gouvernante*, being only a woman; but she said nothing about the cruel rumours that were whispered in Bideford, and spoken of openly at Bratton, that Julie had followed him to Cambridge.

Lady Millicent had taxed her with it, and with keeping her there till too late in the night for any decent girl to be abroad, and sending her back through the dusky woods with that hot-headed, impertinent undergraduate. It was all Lucy's fault. At least, her ladyship, with delightful delicacy, told her so.

It always is the mother's fault when boys go wrong. Oh, fond, foolish mother, if your darling goes wrong, always remember, as you bend over his cradle, as you weep over his bier, that you have no one to thank but yourself! At least, the world says so. But if he succeeds? Oh, that is quite another thing!

Lucy bore Lady Millicent's reproof meekly. She had faith in her boy; she would believe no evil of him. She could not gainsay the girl's flight, and happening, by a strange coincidence, on the same morning as his departure.

Then there was that dreadful, incontrovertible fact, that Julie had gone to Cambridge. So far she had been traced.

Still, whoever was guilty, Herbert was innocent. He was too honourable, Lucy told herself, too innately manly and noble, to mislead a poor, vain, weak creature, wilfully bent on its own destruction; and he was but a mere boy—he could not possibly marry her!

Lucy comforted herself with these reflections, and she put them modestly to Lady Millicent. She had her own private opinion about the misdoing that had been going on at Bratton through the pleasant idle days of the long vacation, and the misdoer, but she kept it discreetly to herself.

There was only one convincing argument that Lucy could bring to bear upon her ladyship. Herbert had no money. The two little golden coins that he changed at the railway-station for his third-class ticket would not pay Julie's travelling expenses, and the little slut had no money of her own.

Lady Millicent listened to these statements with polite incredulity. She was very sorry for Lucy; she was sorry, too, in her lofty, indifferent way for the foolish boy who had been misled by the wily little *gouvernante's* meretricious charms.

But for the girl herself, she had sinned too deeply to be forgiven. Language altogether failed to express her ladyship's just wrath with the ungrateful dependent who had flung her gifts in her face,

with the impertinent jade who had crowned that awful heap of faded finery with worn-out slippers and rouge-pots—*empty ones*.

No; Julie's name was never again to be mentioned at Bratton. A perfectly capable and strong-minded successor was appointed to rule over the amiable children in the schoolroom, and poor little Lucy was summarily dismissed.

Lucy bore her dismissal meekly; she hadn't the spirit of a mouse, but she never reflected for one moment upon her boy. She told him no more than that a new governess had been engaged at the great house, and that her services were no longer required.

The foolish fellow was very glad to hear it. He never thought how that little household at Bideford would go on without the guineas Lucy so hardly earned. He never considered where the money was to come from to meet those outside expenses of his University education, which, like a snowball, grew with the terms.

The simple fellow was foolishly elated that the dear little mother's teaching was at an end. He was going to do great things by-and-by; he was going to win some of the great prizes of life and lay them at her dear feet.

Had he not by way of earnest won some college prizes already, which she kept in a glazed book-case that had once belonged to the old coach, in the best parlour at home?

She was never to work any more; she was never to be anxious, or worried, or distressed by sordid cares, and all those nasty mean worries that leave their cruel lines on the noblest faces. She should have a life of ease, and culture, and repose, by-and-by; a gentle life, full of graceful charities, and crowned with the tenderest love! And meanwhile—while the grass grew?

Well, Lucy was not the only mother whose sons have been going to do great things for her by-and-by. They meant it in their hearts, dear fellows, though the time should never come, or, coming, the dear life should have passed beyond the reach of their love and care!

Herbert said nothing in his letters to Bideford about the discovery he had made. It was not his part to betray the foolish little moth that had wilfully flown into the candle. She had made her own bed, and no doubt the result would be as satisfactory as such bedmaking generally is.

He saw a good deal of Julie now. A day seldom passed but her high-stepping horses might be seen in the street with that ridiculous little groom grinning behind. And at every public event the magnificence of her toilettes astonished all beholders. Spurway was never to be seen in 'madam's' company; but Grinley was often with her, and his escort or his never-failing key, unlocked doors for her that were virtuously closed against females of doubtful antecedents.

Herbert heard her voice in Spurway's room one day when Jayne

and a friend, who had come over from Emmanuel, were drinking tea in his room.

It didn't exactly make his hair stand on end, but he flushed quite crimson, and got up and shut the outer door.

Julie was singing one of her delightful little French songs—a shrill, piercing thing, that even sounded through the oak. It was quite proper—she used to sing it to the children at Bratton—but it made him shiver all over.

Suppose she were to come in and sing it in his room? She was quite likely to; his name was over the door, and Julie was not troubled with scruples.

Jayne had brought in his coadjutor in Barnwell, an Emmanuel man, hailing from the States, who, in addition to working hard for his Tripes, was the best forward in the 'Varsity at football, and the coach of his college boat—a brawny giant of the true American type; self-contained, and sparing of words, but with a twinkle in his steel-blue eyes that showed, with all their shrewdness, that he was not deficient in the national Yankee humour.

John Harvard had a reputation for work; but whether it were from natural modesty or some less amiable weakness, he chose to disguise his activity by an assumption of indolence, propping himself up, when talking, against walls, with his head lolling idly and his great hands in his pockets. He seemed to have been born tired. He was an American by birth, a descendant of the old Pilgrim Fathers—a lineal descendant, indeed, of the old Puritan, John Harvard, who had gone out from Cambridge in the *Magnflower*, and left his name behind him in another Cambridge—in a newer England.

They have put up a window to him at his college—Emmanuel—in the old Cambridge (and a very good window it is, with the *Magnflower* spreading her sails in the background), and a more enduring memorial, in brick and stone, in the new Cambridge.

John Harvard's latest descendant, who had already graduated at the University that bore his name, had come over to take a degree at the older University. He claimed a scholarship at Emmanuel by right of his descent; and he was not treading unworthily in those firm footsteps that have left such a deep impression on the shifting sands of two worlds.

With Julie's French song in his ears, John Harvard was lolling against the wall, and arranging a plan of campaign with Jayne for their winter's work in Barnwell.

While they were talking, the chapel bell began to ring, and Jayne limped over to the door. It took him a long time to cross the Great Court. Harvard slouched out after him, in his awkward fashion; and the moment they got on the landing, the opposite door opened, and Julie came out.

Her face was radiant, and her dress was radiant; and she was such a perfectly delightful and unexpected vision on that dingy

staircase, that Jayne involuntarily stepped back. He had a ridiculous habit of getting out of everybody's way, and he stepped back to let her pass.

But Julie had no intention of passing. There were two ingenious undergraduates in the doorway, and another flying down from the upper flight of stairs in his surplice. Julie passed through them with a little cry of recognition; she didn't exactly throw herself on Herbert's bosom, but she held out her beautifully-gloved hand to him before them all; and he took it.

The men went down the stairs gravely, and the chapel bell went on ringing; and Herbert found himself talking to the little governess as he had talked to her in his mother's parlour at Bideford.

Spurway passed down the stairs with his friends.

'You know your way out?' he called up to her as he went down.

'Yes,' she cried gaily over the banisters; '*my fœre and my tigre* are waiting.'

She followed Herbert into his room, and talked to him about Bratton and his mother. He winced involuntarily to hear that sacred name spoken by such light lips, but he soon got used to it. She praised his room, his pictures, his books, his chairs, the faded flowers in his windows, a superannuated fern in a pot on his table, his harlequin tea-service, and the little silver teapot that she remembered at Bideford.

The chapel bell stopped ringing, and he hung his surplice up with a sigh. When the men came in from chapel, she was still there; and Jayne, who had put his head in at the door, shut it in haste when he recognised Herbert's visitor, and limped upstairs to his garret quicker than he had ever limped up before.

CHAPTER XVI.

TOMMY'S LITTLE BROTHER.

'And caught once more the distant shout,
'The measured pulse of racing oars.'

If not the gayest term in the University year, with its shortening days, and the dripping fen fogs closing in, October term is not lacking in pleasant devices for passing the time.

For those who do not play football, or ride bicycles, or wear out their boots on the Grantchester 'grind,' there is always the river.

If one doesn't handle the oar, there is better fun to be got, without the risk of misadventure, by looking on.

The Freshmen's Trial Eights and sculling races made the river lively; and Herbert, try as he would, couldn't keep away from the bank. It was so cold on the bank that he easily persuaded himself

that he should be better off on the river ; and so, without intending it, he found himself once more in his college eight. Geraint's shoulder was all right again, and he, too, had taken his old place in the boat.

In spite of the cold winds and the sleet, there was a fair sprinkling of ladies on the bank during the short winter afternoons when the men were practising, the Belles of Cambridge among them ; perhaps it would be more accurate to say the Belle, as the elder Miss Bellenden's beauty was decidedly on the wane by daylight. A discreet arrangement of *Bloom-de-Nnon* and other gentle aids to Nature, veiled from the too ardent gaze of Apollo and the crucial daylight by a gossamer of a becoming tint, still secured for Miss Bellenden the easy admiration of impressionable undergraduates.

Hebe Bellenden required no such fictitious aids at present, though her lovely colour was a trifle fixed. She still ruled by right divine the Belle of Cambridge.

The cold winds brought fresh roses to her cheeks in addition to the stationary ones, and the sun lent a gleam of its own to the pale gold of her hair ; and the lovely whiteness and softness of her complexion were never more lovely than when relieved by the rich velvet and sables of her outdoor toilette. At least Geraint thought so, as, regardless of the ballyragging giant on the bank who coached the Second Trinity, he allowed his attention to be distracted by Hebe Bellenden's charms.

Grinley met the sisters Bellenden by the ferry, and, as the boats passed, Herbert saw him walking between them with a cool defiant air of ownership that sent all the blood into Geraint's face and neck as he jumped recklessly out of the boat, and he was quite red enough from his exertion before.

Herbert didn't like the look of matters, and he told Geraint so with a curious mixture of diffidence and boldness as they crossed Midsummer Common in one of the sudden fogs that close in the late autumn days on the river.

'I am going to say something very disagreeable, old fellow,' he said by way of beginning. 'I'm going to make a beast of myself.'

'All right ; fire away !' was Geraint's encouraging reply.

The wind was sweeping up from the marshes, and the mists were solemnly rising over the river, and there was a silence between them for a little while. Geraint was so much older than Herbert, and not a man of his standing, and he hesitated before availing himself of his permission to 'fire away.'

'I have been thinking,' he began diffidently, 'while we have been in the boat, and while I have seen her on the bank,' he didn't say who, 'that—that this engagement of yours may lead to very miserable things.'

'It will lead to the most miserable things,' Geraint said, speaking thickly out of the fog ; 'but whatever it leads to will not influence me.'

'You—you cannot give her up?'

The fog made Herbert bold ; he could not see the other's face.

'I would not give her up if I could.'

'Oh, Geraint! Think of your father ; of—of the girl you are engaged to !'

'I have thought of them,' said Geraint calmly. 'I have counted the exact cost, and if it were ten thousand times more than it is, I would not give Hebe Bellenden up.'

'You think so now.'

'I shall always think so !'

There was no more said about it during their walk home through the fog.

Geraint went to see Hebe Bellenden after Hall. There was seldom a night passed but he went to that secluded house at Chesterton. When he was not there his spirit haunted it. When he was wining with his friends, or losing heavily at cards—he always lost—or smoking at the Pitt, or listening to windy debates at the Union—wherever his body happened to be his spirit was always wandering about that house of doubtful reputation.

But his body as well as his spirit was there to-night. He called Herbert into his rooms before he went. He wore his gown over his dress-suit, and a flower in his button-hole. He was standing beside a table trifling nervously with a book that lay open before him.

'You have acted a friend's part to me, Flowers,' he began, still turning the pages, 'and I am going to trust you. I am going to show you the face of the woman I am engaged to marry—the woman whose life I am spoiling.'

He turned the page of the album as he spoke, and the face of Mary Barclay confronted him—a strikingly beautiful face, clear-cut, well-defined features, a firm yet flexible mouth, and perfectly straightforward and candid eyes. The face was not smiling ; it was a trifle cold and calm and self-possessed, but it impressed one with a sense of suppressed feeling. There was nothing artificial in it.

Herbert shivered as he stood silently contemplating the beautiful face before him. It was so unlike the other.

'It is a noble face !' he said presently.

'She is a noble woman !' Geraint said, involuntarily closing the book with a spring, 'and—and I am a scoundrel !'

'And she loves you?' Herbert asked under his breath.

He spoke of it as such a sacred thing ; he was only a boy still, and the only woman's love he had ever known was the love of the little mother.

'Yes, she loves me. She has been engaged to me all her life. We were brought up together. My individuality has long been merged in hers. I am known as Mary's husband.'

'Oh, Geraint, how will she bear it?'

The colour left Geraint's face, and he turned away to light a cigar, and threw the match in the grate. He stood before the fire for some moments looking at the face that confronted him on the mantelpiece—the lovely face that was luring him to destruction. A terrible impulse seized Herbert to take the fair false thing from its pedestal and fling it into the midst of the flames that roared up the college chimney.

Perhaps Geraint read some such intention in his eyes as he glanced gloomily up at the photograph that was smiling down upon him. Herbert restrained himself, and put his hands in his pockets instead.

'No,' he said slowly, puffing the smoke out between his lips as he spoke, with apparent tranquillity; 'there is no comparison to be made between them, Flowers. Mary Barclay is worth a thousand of her—and—he has a million of money. I am not fitted to be a poor man; I have extravagant tastes, and I know exactly the value of money. But, in spite of all this, Mary Barclay will have to go to the wall.'

He sat smoking quite calmly as he said this, inspecting the ash of the tobacco and the texture of the cigar, as if his judgment were a matter of importance.

'How will you break it to her?'

'I shall never break it to her. When I am married to Hebe'—here his face flushed scarlet in the firelight—'she will know it, not till then. She has the noblest heart in the world, and this will break it.'

He rose as he spoke and took up his cap, sauntering carelessly to the door like one walking in a dream, stopping now and then to look at the prints on the wall as if he had never seen them before.

Something in his attitude recalled to Herbert the man who had followed Hebe in that dazed, stricken way, on that memorable night, out of the room, and the whole scene rose up before him.

'For God's sake, Geraint,' he said, following him to the door and detaining him—'for God's sake, pause, before it is too late!'

'It is too late now,' he answered bitterly, with a gloomy smile. He paused at the door with a mirthless laugh. 'And if it were not,' he said, 'if she released me to-night, I should crawl back to-morrow like a beaten hound, and lay my life, my very soul, at her feet.'

He went out into the night, and Herbert stood in the doorway looking after him. He looked so handsome, and frank, and manly, as he stood in the lamplight making this terrible confession, that Herbert sighed involuntarily, thinking of his ruined life, his blighted prospects.

It was Herbert's first night in Barnwell, and while Geraint went his wilful way, Herbert and Jayne groped theirs through the fog to Emmanuel, where they found Harvard awaiting them. They lost each other several times on Parker's Piece, and arrived in Barn-

well just as all the mothers had, with quite wonderful unanimity, come to fetch all the children.

'Bless you,' said one mother, with a shawl over her head and a bundle in her arms; they all had shawls over their heads, and most of them had bundles in their arms—'bless you, if I weren't to fetch Tommy, he'd lose himself in the fog, and lead us a pretty dance all night. He never do lose a chance of losing himself, Tommy don't!'

It was too late to begin work, for the children were tired and sleepy; but the chance was too good a one to be lost.

They could get Tommy any day, but Tommy's mother was quite a different thing.

'Let us have a hymn, at any rate, before they go,' Jayne pleaded.

The children were thronging to the door, but Harvard, coming in last, got himself between it and them. It was his favourite position. He was never more at home than when propping himself up against a door, and with his hands in his pockets.

He took them out now—they were great muscular hands that could twist a bar of iron into a corkscrew—and he was tenderly unwrapping the little pink bundle in the arms of the woman nearest the door.

'All right, old man,' he said, in that clear ringing voice of his that was audible all over the room; 'just wait a minute. I want to see "Tommy's little brother."'

'Now, here's a wonderful thing: he's made friends with me already; see!' and he held up his great strong hand with the feeble pink fist clinging to it. 'Who'd have thought that the little chap knew that I was a friend? I don't believe any man in the dark would have put out his hand to me, and clung to me in this way. See, he's hanging on still! What a plucky little chap! he hasn't a bit of fear in him. Now, if I wanted a text for a sermon, I should choose "Tommy's little brother."'

The women were all listening to him rapt, and the children were listening too, and nobody was in a hurry to go. It would have been all the same if they had been, with that great, burly giant of an Emmanuel man propping himself up against the door, with his head rolling idly, as if seeking for a convenient resting-place.

And there, in his easy, familiar way, with the little pink fist pointing the moral of his sermon, he addressed the mothers of Barnwell on the duties and responsibilities of their position. He wound up his brief address by reminding them of the words of a wise man—the wisest of all times: 'Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.' 'Now,' he said, 'you train up Tommy's little brother in the right way, and when he's a man grown—a great big, strong fellow, I take it he'll be, and one of the right sort—he'll have his fling, maybe, and eat the husks, as we all have to do if we follow our own inclinations;

but he'll come back to the right way in the end. He's got a soft place in his heart, like the rest of us—a very soft place, I should say, by the look of him—and he'll never forget the prayers he used to say at his mother's knee, the hymns he used to sing round the hearth at home, the sound of the church bells that rang in his ears when he walked by his mother's side to church in the days of his innocent childhood. Do you think a man ever forgets these things? I tell you some men, when they are dying—men who have led wild reckless lives—look up suddenly, just at the end, and declare to those who are standing by that they hear the old church bells they heard in their childhood ringing in their ears, and they are calling them, as they called them of old, into the presence of God.

'Depend upon it, there is no act of yours now, no tender precepts, no gentle example, that will be lost upon your children. When you are gone, and they are scattered about in the world, and your little home is broken up, don't you think that your children will have forgotten you. They are never likely to forget you. Some day they will get memorials of you, and divide them among themselves to adorn their humble homes.

'One will have your Bible; another the rough wooden table, round which you all used to kneel—the family altar; another will have the poor cheap likeness of your dear face—how inexpressibly dear you will never know.

'Depend upon it, they will never forget your face. However plain and coarse and common it may be, it is the most beautiful face in the world to them, and so with your example.

"'It must be right," they will say, "because my mother did it," and if they have loved you so much, will they not quite naturally look forward to meeting you again as the dearest hope and comfort of their lives? To have a mother in heaven before us, anticipating our coming there, as she once used to anticipate it here, makes it very real and near to us.

'Thank God I have one there myself!' and the strong man bent down over the little pink list for a moment, and Tommy's mother remarked that it was wet and shining when he looked up again.

'The parting from them, whenever it comes, and it must come some day to us all, will have lost its sting if you have lived together here in the fear and love of God. You will have this abiding comfort, that you will meet them all again some day. God will bring their wandering feet home, every one of them. All the sad faces, all the tired footsteps, whether of parents or children, are all pressing forward—all travelling onwards towards that home. God grant you all a safe journey and a happy meeting!'

The women were all weeping, and the elder boys, who usually made as much noise as they possibly could in going downstairs, went down softly, and made way for the little ones. Herbert stopped at the door, and bent over the little pink bundle in the woman's arms,

'God bless Tommy's little brother,' he said huskily, 'for giving us so good a text !'

It might have been the fog that had got down his throat, for he had to clear it a good many times as he crossed Parker's Piece with Jayne limping by his side.

'Dear me,' said Jayne presently, pausing for breath, 'we forgot all about the hymn ! You ought to have given out a hymn, Jack.'

'All right, old man, it isn't too late now ; what'll you have ?' Harvard called out a little in advance. 'We've been scattering a little promiscuous seed to-night : shall we have "The Sower" ?'

The fog was so dense that they could not see his burly figure, but they could hear his cheery voice stirring all the sodden, broken-spirited echoes around Parker's Piece—'The sower went forth sowing.'

CHAPTER XVII.

MADAM JEZEBEL.

'Learned to work the wary dogcart
Artfully through King's Parade.'

HERBERT saw more of Julie in those closing days of the term than he cared to see. She found her way much too often up that dingy staircase, and shocked the austere proprieties of the college by keeping her dogcart and her tiger for hours driving up and down before the gate of Trinity.

It didn't matter to Spurway and his friends, who drank wine and smoked and lounged about his rooms during the wet winter afternoons, while Julie sang little French songs. They amused themselves in their way, and had no reputations to lose. But to Herbert these visits of Julie meant very different things. His scholarship and his blameless life were the whole of his capital. He had no other resources to fall back upon. There were his musty old classics and the old coach's silver inkstand. But that was in Spurway's room ; he had forgotten to return it, and Herbert was too modest to remind him of it.

He sported his oak, like St. Anthony did, no doubt, if there happened to have been one to his cell, whenever he heard that footstep on his stairs. But it was all of no use ; Julie had the sharpest ears in the world, and whenever Herbert's door opened to let out a friend, admitted by some preconcerted signal, Julie, by a most curious coincidence, would open the door opposite, and would run across the landing and have a word with the hermit.

This was generally just before chapel, and the giddy little thing would flutter about his room until he took down his surplice, and modestly terminated her visit by leaving her in possession and hurrying down the stairs.

This was not always effectual. More than once she tripped down the stairs after him, and bade him adieu in the quad, with the Dons hurrying by in their surplices.

It was after one of these visits that Herbert received a summons from his tutor. He had long waited for an opportunity of putting Brown's case before him. Mr. Routh was a trifle hard, and distinctly unapproachable, and he had watched and waited for some fitting occasion, a softening moment, which even college tutors are liable to, for pleading Brown's cause.

He seized his cap and gown, and, armed with Brown's letter, hurried across the quad. Mr. Routh was specially interested in Herbert's work; he had playfully spoken of him, indeed, as a budding senior classic, and occasionally sent for him to talk it over with him. Herbert had no cause for trepidation as he climbed that familiar staircase, three steps at a time: his heart, except from the exertion, beat as quietly as if he were going to his own rooms. He had never yet received a reproof from those hard lips for failure or neglect.

In happy confidence he presented himself in the tutor's room.

Mr. Routh's adamant countenance was a trifle harder and colder than usual.

He didn't ask Herbert to sit down, and he rose up from his own seat, and covered the fireplace with his back, and kept all the warmth of the fire from him, as he stood diffidently, cap in hand, on the edge of the rug.

'I have sent for you, Mr. Flowers,' he began stiffly, 'to request you to beg the—er—female who, I am told, comes to your rooms very frequently, to—er—discontinue her visits.'

Herbert turned as red as he had ever done in the earliest days of his blushes, and his voice faltered, and the room seemed to be going round with him.

'Yes, sir,' he said; and that was all he could say.

He had had such an old-fashioned training in honour, that he could not, to establish his own innocence, betray another.

'I am very sorry to have occasion to speak to you on such a subject,' and the tutor's pale face flushed, and he looked at Herbert steadily. 'And, I must own, I am disappointed in you, Mr. Flowers.'

The tears were smarting in Herbert's eyes, and he was silent, looking down at the pattern of the worn Turkey rug.

The tutor took this for an admission of guilt, and his shaggy eyebrows knitted fiercely.

'You are not a freshman,' he said severely, scrutinizing Herbert's look and manner, which were certainly more guilty than defiant. 'You have not that excuse for setting the rules of the college at defiance, and as a scholar you have set an example of open and shameless immorality, which will meet with the reproof it deserves when it is brought before the college authorities.'

'I beg your pardon, sir,' said Herbert modestly. He wasn't thinking of his own shame, but of his little mother at home. 'But you are judging me unjustly. I—I have no relations whatever to be ashamed of with the lady you saw leaving my rooms. I knew her as a child at Bideford. She was my mother's visitor.'

What else could he say more in attestation of Julie's respectability?

'Whatever your previous connection may have been with her,' said the tutor icily, with a curl about the corners of his mouth, 'she is not the sort of visitor for undergraduates' rooms. If she attempts to enter the college again, the matter will be in the hands of the Proctors. Good-morning, Mr. Flowers!'

And, so dismissed, Herbert turned away. There was a singing in his ears, and his eyes were smarting, and he didn't go downstairs three at a time. He remembered, as he crossed the quad, a little story that Julie had told him of her right to the name she bore—Madam Spurway; but it had never occurred to him to justify her visits to his staircase as the wife of his neighbour, Tom Spurway.

Julie had a talent for romancing, and this story was, no doubt, a creation of her fertile imagination. At any rate, he said nothing to his tutor about it.

He was in a very savage mood when he reached his own staircase. Spurway was coming blandly across the landing to borrow something, but he cut him dead, and slammed his oak in his face.

Casting his cap and gown off fiercely—breaking the only sound corner of his cap—he flung himself on the couch—the leg had been mended—and buried his face in his hands.

Jayne, who had been sitting in the big armchair by the fire, jumped up at once, as quickly as his infirmity would let him.

'My dear fellow,' he said, 'what's the matter? Has anything happened, Flowers? That Madam Jezebel—I beg her pardon—has been here, and I've sent her away. I hope it isn't that?'

Poor Jayne was trembling all over, and his honest face wore a look of deep concern.

'No,' Herbert groaned from the couch; 'it isn't that. I'm much obliged to you for doing it.'

'I'm very sorry I came in,' said Jayne; 'if I'm in the way—'

'You are not in the way!' Herbert interrupted impatiently. 'I think you were sent here on purpose to—to help me out of it. I begin to see a purpose in things now.'

'Now, really; do you?' said Jayne, with his kind face beaming. 'If it'll relieve you to tell me all about it, whatever it is that has upset you, I'm sure I'll do what I can to help you.'

And so, with his hot face buried in the cushion of his couch, Herbert poured out the cruel story of the tutor's injustice and suspicion.

'And I could not clear myself!' Herbert moaned disconsolately.

'No, of course you couldn't!' said Jayne cheerfully. 'It isn't

often one gets a chance of suffering for anybody else. I don't think, under any circumstances, that you would be justified in—in explaining matters. It is better to suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing, Flowers. But I think Spurway ought to explain.'

'I shall never tell him,' said Herbert bitterly.

'But I shall,' said Jayne; 'and I shall tell him to keep that Madam Jezebel away. I'd have nothing more to do with the matter if I were you, Flowers. One cannot touch pitch without being defiled.'

Jayne was as good as his word, and Herbert heard him limping over to Spurway's door when he went out.

The warning had the desired effect, and Julie came no more to Herbert's rooms.

Spurway did not explain, and when he met Herbert on the stairs or in the quad he slunk away from the scornful reproach in the boy's honest eyes like a whipped hound.

There was a decided coldness in the attitude of all the college dignitaries to Herbert after this episode. The Master rustled by in his silk gown, and his noble face never relaxed into a smile as he coldly acknowledged Herbert's greeting, and Mrs. Howell never stopped to ask after the little mother now; and the Trinity Lily looked straight over his head when she passed him in the quad, and once, when he met her clear eyes in the chapel when he was making his humble confession on his knees (he had no business to be looking that way; he was not making his confession to her), he read there quite as plainly as if she had spoken the words:

'I am disappointed in you, Herbert Flowers!'

It was in everybody's eyes, if not on their tongues. The tutor's severe frown had not relaxed, the urbane Proctors looked suspicious, and the Dean's kind eyes had a world of grave reproof in them that cut Herbert to the quick more than words.

He bore the reproach and shame in silence, but he sent his bed-maker across the landing for his silver inkstand. He would have no more communication with the hopeful scion of the house of Spurway, in whose case certainly *noblesse* did not *oblige*.

Geraint was furious; Jayne had told him, and begged him to use his influence with Spurway to 'own up' and make a clean breast of it.

'It's the most caddish thing I ever heard,' said Geraint hotly. 'By Jove, he ought to be cut! If there's any more stir made about it, I shall lay the whole business before the principals. If that Madam Jezebel is really his wife, he ought to say so, and not drag the reputations of honest men and women in the dust by getting mixed up with her.'

He was thinking of Hebe, not of Herbert, just then. He met her and Spurway at the Bellendens' a few nights after this explosion, and cut them in such a marked manner that Miss Bellenden

requested him not to come there again until he could treat her guests with more consideration.

Julie took it into her foolish little head that Herbert was the cause of her being turned out of Trinity. The delightful visits to Spurway's rooms were at an end. She could no longer bewilder the eyes of ingenuous undergraduates in the quad, as she passed through it, like Solomon in all his glory, or ogle them on the staircase; and her tiger was warned off parading that smart dogcart before the gate of Trinity.

It was all Herbert's fault! and in a delightful, ill-written, spiteful letter, she told him so, and added a threat to make him rue it when the opportunity presented itself.

He put down the letter with a smile. And he had once thought that he loved this woman!

Well, his standard of female excellence had changed. All standards change. The illusion, like other illusions, was quite gone. She was ever so much handsomer than in the old days, in the mother's little parlour at Bideford, but she was not the same, somehow. The light had gone quite out of her eyes for him (the men who used to meet her in the quad said they were so bright that you could light a cigar at them, but they didn't shine for him). In vain she tossed her pretty head, or displayed her most bewildering graces. Herbert had long since ceased to be bewildered by such tinsel. He knew the right thing now when he saw it—and he saw it pretty often in the college chapel.

It might as well have been up in heaven as down there in the stalls of Trinity, under the organ-loft, for what it could ever be to him. He had learnt at least one lesson from it, that it was quite well to learn early in life, if it only brought cold comfort in the end.

He was ashamed, and humiliated, and very sad, but he had quite realized, looking across the hymns in chapel at that divinity singing somewhere between earth and heaven, that one must needs love the highest.

There was nothing more said about bringing Herbert's flagrant immorality before the college authorities. The Dons glowered at him with unaccustomed severity; but perhaps a doubt had risen in their superior minds as to the real offender, and their awful displeasure took no other outward and visible form.

But this was not Herbert's only source of uneasiness. With all his care and economy, his debts had increased instead of diminished during the term.

There was that wretched dress-suit, crumpled up at the bottom of his drawers, that he hated to look upon, and his boating flannels and blazers, and that new suit he wore with such becoming modesty at the Senate-house when he recited his prize poem before the Vice-Chancellor. He had to go to a separate tailor for each of these items, to satisfy the scruples of his tutor, who had a whim, in

common with other University tutors, that no undergraduate should incur a liability exceeding the sum of five pounds without that interesting fact being brought to his knowledge. So Herbert had a three-barrelled tailor's bill running at once, and they all, with singular unanimity, presented their accounts at the same moment.

Other Cambridge tradesmen took the advantage of the end of the term to present theirs, and Herbert had quite a flutter of wings around his glass to greet him whenever he stirred his fire. There were none round Jayne's glass; but then, as he explained, he never bought anything that he had not the money in his pocket to pay for, and never, under any circumstances, anything that he could do without.

Herbert groaned, and when he was gone stuffed them all into a drawer of his writing-table, and turned the key with a great deal of unnecessary vehemence.

He didn't go down to Bideford that vacation. He had no heart to face the little mother with that skeleton rattling its dry bones in the cupboard—at least, in the drawer he had so carefully locked. So he went down with Jayne to spend the Christmas with his people at Lynn.

Geraint came in the night before they went down. His gyp was packing his things; his interview with his tutor was over—in which Mr. Routh had taken the opportunity of making a few grave and appropriate remarks on the unprofitable result of his last year's pursuit—and he had come in to say a few last words to Herbert before going down. He had altered his plans at the last moment.

'I say, I'm not going to Rome, after all, Flowers,' he began.

'Well,' said Herbert, 'what's up?'

'Oh, I'm going home instead,' and a faint colour suffused his face. 'Fact is,' he said frankly, 'it's Christmas time, and I've never spent a Christmas away from my people before; and—and—I have an impression I shall never spend a Christmas with them again.'

Something choked in his throat as he spoke, and both were silent for a few minutes.

'You know I'm awfully superstitious,' Geraint began, puffing away furiously at the cigar he was smoking; 'I've always been so—it's in the family—a weak version of second-sight. I always knew, when I was a boy at school, when I was going to have an accident at football. I knew beforehand just exactly as if it had happened. I used to tell the other fellows, and it always came true. I broke my arm once in my sleep, and I broke it again the next day in the field in exactly the same place.'

'Mere coincidence,' said Herbert shortly; some such uncomfortable feeling had been pursuing him lately.

It was the first Christmas that he had ever spent away from that humble home.

'It's more than a coincidence,' said Geraint gravely. 'I shall

never eat another Christmas dinner with my own people under my own roof. My chair will be vacant next Christmas. They will speak in hushed tones about me when they gather round the hearth and burn the yule log next year. I saw it all last night, and my seat was vacant, and that is why I am not going to Rome.'

Herbert stirred the fire uneasily.

'You will be on your wedding-tour, I suppose?' he said, merely for the sake of saying something.

Geraint's face brightened.

'It will be a long tour,' he said, smiling; 'longer than most men's. It will last all our lives. Shall we get tired of each other I wonder?'

He paused and looked at the fire. It was burning hollow, and a shining edifice, with gleaming towers and brilliant halls, was glowing in Herbert's grate.

'I shall never cease to love her,' he continued, speaking confidently; 'but—but—she may get tired of me. It would be an awful sell if she were to! Fancy the misery of having a wife who—who didn't care for you! Fancy going through the world with a proud, cold-blooded she-devil who hated you!'

The Palace Beautiful in the fire suddenly collapsed, the shining walls fell in, and it lay a heap of black and smouldering ruins.

Geraint got up impatiently.

'What a fool I am!' he said; 'she loves me more than I deserve.'

Herbert gave a very decided grunt of disapproval.

'Do you think that she would like you quite as well without your money? if you were a poor man and your father cut you off, as you say he is very likely to do, do you think she's the sort of girl for love in a cottage?' he asked in the most disagreeable way.

'She will never know what sacrifices I have made for her,' Geraint answered in his most magnificent manner; and, failing to find sympathy from his friend, he strode off moodily to bed.

Herbert went to Lynn the following day. The third-class fare was only a few shillings, so he saved the cost of that long journey to Bideford. The little mother ought to have been delighted at his economy, but when she got his letter she sighed as she folded it up, and if the truth must be told, dropped a tear or two upon it.

She had plenty of time for weeping now. The time hung so heavily upon her hands now that the teaching was over. No doubt it was quite right for Herbert to go away with his friend and read. The place was very lonely here for him—only her dull society. He was used to mixing up with other men as his equals at Cambridge, but here the small gentry would hold aloof from him. He would have no honour in his own country.

But for all this Lucy was disappointed: she had counted the days in her weary calendar until he should return, and by his own

fearless presence set at rest the cruel lying tongues that had been wagging so busily about him.

They would wag more now, and with more reason, and would find in his absence an additional proof of his guilt.

The heir of the great house across the Torridge was back, being fêted and made much of among his own people, having at last quite successfully passed the Little-Go.

He was so condescending as to drop into the cottage once when Lucy was taking her humble mid-day meal—in the kitchen—with the little maid, and he stayed at her request to give her some account of Herbert.

How greedily she gathered up all the little crumbs of information about her boy! how grateful she was for this visit, and what burning coals of fire she heaped upon the head of the heir of Bratton as he crept humbly and shamefaced out of her poor cottage.

He sent her a brace of pheasants the very next day. She would have sent them on to Herbert, but she remembered in time that it might hurt the feelings of the college cook, so she ate them herself, she and the little maid, rather grudgingly, but quite thankfully. She hadn't the spirit of a mouse.

To do him justice, Tom Spurway represented to her ladyship the obvious injustice of dismissing Herbert's mother for her son's folly—always supposing it *were* his, of which there was no real evidence—but Lady Millicent would not have the subject mentioned in her presence. She had never forgiven Julie for that unfeeling exhibition of rouge pots.

She flew into what, with more vulgar mortals, would be called a rage, and poured out such a stream of violent and by no means euphonious invectives upon the ungrateful object of her charity, that the son of the house left her boudoir, where he had ventured upon this feeble remonstrance, with a face a trifle whiter than her ladyship's morning cap.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE DEAN'S RING.

' . . . Nothing walks with aimless feet.'

HERBERT hadn't forgotten Brown; though so far as his mediation with the authorities went, he hadn't by the end of the term found an opportunity of serving him.

He came back the first day of term. There was nobody up, and it was cold, raw, depressing weather. The bedmaker didn't expect him, and his rooms were in confusion, and there was no fire. He was crossing the quad in the gloom of the raw January afternoon,

going on a hopeless quest to see if any other men were up, when he encountered the Dean.

He capped him modestly and passed on, but the Dean turned and looked after him. He had gathered his poor thin overcoat around him to keep out the biting cold; it had been a great-coat once, but it had long ceased to be great in any sense. He had long outgrown it, and it was utterly insufficient to keep out the cold, and his tall figure looked gaunt and thin, and he had a hollow-sounding racking cough that went quite to the heart of the Dean.

He called after him as he reached the gate of Trinity, and Herbert turned back.

He didn't know what he expected, he was feeling so utterly cold and miserable; least of all did he expect to be taken to the Dean's rooms, and warmed at the Dean's cheerful fire, and drink his tea out of the Dean's old china cups and saucers.

Whatever the poor boy's sin might be—and the Dean's attitude towards that form of sin that his tutor had taxed him with was very severe—his sympathies were touched by his loneliness and his poverty, and that nasty cold on his chest.

The best way to win a man's heart, perhaps, is to let him do you a service, no matter how trifling. Put yourself under an obligation to your enemy, and acknowledge it in suitable terms, and you will have poured coals of fire on his head. The Samaritan had a deeper interest ever after in the man he had benefited than if he had passed him by on the road and given no alms or assistance to him.

The Dean talked to Herbert about his work and his occupations during the vacation, and the poor boy told him that he hadn't been home. He told him the simple truth—he couldn't afford the journey. And then, thawing by degrees, he told him about the little mother and her disappointment. The Dean sighed and looked down at the ring he wore, which he turned fondly in his hands while he led Herbert on to speak about his mother.

He remembered the sad story twenty years ago when Ernest Flowers died, almost suddenly, on the eve of success (with just such another racking cough as Herbert's), leaving a young wife and an infant child. He thought he recalled that sad young face as he had seen it in the college chapel. His own face beamed with generous sympathy as Herbert modestly recounted the touching story of Lucy's life. No lips but her boy's could tell it so tenderly; but sometimes they faltered, and his eyes grew moist. It was such a monotonous story; it had but one object, but one motive ran through it—love.

When he had finished, the Dean, who had been twirling his great ring about (it was no precious stone, only a bit of crystal with some faded hair beneath it), said in a softened tone:

'Some day, Flowers, I may have a story to tell you myself. I hope for your sake the day will never come. I only tell it to men who come to me in trouble, who have fallen or failed through their

own folly or weakness, and who come to me for help. Should that day ever come, Flowers—if you should ever have a confession to make which it would help you for a fellow-man to hear—come to me, and I will tell you the story of—of this *In Memoriam* ring I always wear. It has no significance except to those in trouble.’

He was looking at Herbert very searchingly with his grave kind eyes; but he bore the scrutiny unmoved, until he suddenly remembered Brown, and Brown’s reference to the Dean’s ring. Then he flushed quite scarlet in his ridiculous boyish fashion.

Was he going to make a confession now? He was only going to speak about Brown, and plead Brown’s cause as well as that nasty cough would allow him. The Dean promised to talk it over with his tutor, and he sent Herbert back to his rooms with his own great woollen comforter round his throat.

He came in later on, when Herbert had gone shivering to bed in his cold sheets, with an india-rubber hot-water bottle in his hands, which he made the boy put to his cold feet. And he produced from his pocket book a mysterious bit of paper, ‘a little mustard-leaf,’ as he explained, which he applied to Herbert’s chest; and before he left the room he knelt down on the little worn bit of carpet beside his bed and asked the Great Healer to bless the simple means.

Herbert was better in the morning; but that nasty troublesome cough kept him a prisoner in his rooms for several days. The Dean came over to see him while he was at breakfast, and recommended that his college commons should be supplemented by a dish of oatmeal porridge.

‘I take it every morning myself,’ he said. ‘I have taken it for years. I do not think that I could get through the day without it.’

And then he told Herbert that he had talked Brown’s case over with his tutor, and that he had promised to consider it.

Mr. Routh not only considered it, but he wrote to Brown, and Brown sent the letter on to Herbert. It was very curt and cold, but it was to the purpose.

‘If you assure me,’ Mr. Routh wrote, ‘that you intend loyally to submit to the college authorities, I will give you permission to come up this term. But if you give any trouble by irregularities in attendance at lectures, gates, chapels, or conduct in general, you must expect this permission to be at any time withdrawn.’

It was under these auspices that Brown returned to Trinity.

He looked worn and anxious, Herbert thought, when the excitement of the first greeting was over; but he was as cheery and hopeful as ever. It did Herbert’s heart good to see his dear round face beaming at him over the teapot, and pouring out all his simple hopes and fears while the kettle was boiling.

He toasted the muffins, too, and was so absorbed in these interesting topics that he involuntarily took off upon either surface of them two fine proof impressions of the bars of Herbert’s grate.

Cudworth, who had returned the day previously, broke in upon

Brown's confidences by putting his rough carrotty head into the room with a brutal inquiry, under the circumstances, of 'How's Maria?'

Brown looked up with sudden anguish in his face; it had got so red with the exertion of toasting the muffin, and so greasy with eating it, that it was quite a sight to behold.

'Anything up?' Cudworth asked in a most unfeeling manner, remarking Brown's facial contortions.

Brown groaned, and Herbert begged Cudworth to come in and shut the door—the draught was unbearable—and have a cup of tea.

'Nothing particular,' said Brown gloomily, 'only—she's thrown me over.'

'Hooray!' said Cudworth, throwing his cap in the air and catching it; 'there's some hope for you now, Brown.'

He had never learnt the true story of that photograph.

'It served me right,' said Brown very despondently, eating the muffin with some appetite. 'She never forgave me for being sent down. Her grandfather was an Archdeacon, and when she heard I'd given up the Church, and I was going into an office in the City, or sheep farming in the colonies, she gave me up. It cost her a great deal, she said; but she's taken up since with a doctor in our part, and—and I believe she's going to marry him.'

'Whew!' said Cudworth, with an unfeeling whistle. 'Grandfather an Archdeacon!'

He swallowed his tea and retreated up to his garret; and they heard him singing on the way his favourite air, with variations:

'Oh, Kicklebury Brown! oh, Kicklebury Brown!
What a simple old man you are!'

Geraint did not come up until the last night and the last train. An hour later, and he could not have kept the term.

Late as it was, he came up to Herbert's room. He was not in bed, for he had been expecting him all day, and when he heard the bustle of his arrival beneath he went out on the landing and shouted out:

'Hullo!'

'Hullo!' Geraint responded; but the tone, hearty as it was, had not the old ring in it.

He came up presently, with his big overcoat on that he had worn for travelling. It was a bitter night, and he was smoking a huge cigar.

When Herbert had put him in a chair—his best one—and taken a good look at him, he remarked two things: The first, that the expression of his face had changed; it was grave and calm, with the calmness of a settled purpose. And, secondly, that it had softened wonderfully during these few weeks. It was no longer hard and cynical.

'Well,' he said, stretching out his legs before the cheerful blaze of the fire that Herbert had considerably kept up, 'it's all over!'

'What is all over?' Herbert asked.

He had an impression of what was coming.

'The beginning of the end,' Geraint answered quietly, puffing away at his cigar. 'I have taken my last farewell of them. I shall never see their faces again. I shall never see the old place again.'

He went on smoking as if he had said the most commonplace thing.

'I—I hope you left good friends,' said Herbert hesitatingly. 'I hope there was no row.'

'Yes, thank God, I have that comfort! We parted the best of friends. I stayed with them till the last moment. I could not grudge them the last hour of my last vacation. Mary threw a slipper after me for luck; I have it in my pocket now.' And he took out of the pocket of his overcoat a dainty lady's slipper. 'And my old dog followed me to the door. He is lame, and nearly blind. I have had him ever since I was a boy, and he sat on the doorstep and whined. The last impression I have of the home that will never be a home to me again was the sound of the dear old dog's lament—was the sight of Mary's dear face.'

He threw the end of the cigar into the fire, and rose up from his seat, sauntering towards the door, as if the conversation had grown stupid and uninteresting.

Herbert drew his hand across his eyes; he had pictured in a moment the whole scene: the fair girl waving her adieux to the lover whose face she would never see again; the dumb, faithful brute, with the unerring instinct of love, whining his sad lament for the master he had loved all his life.

'Oh, Geraint,' he exclaimed, moved out of himself, 'it is not too late!'

'It is quite too late, my dear fellow,' he said with a quiet smile. 'As I told you before, I have counted the cost. My happiness, and the happiness of these, are but as a feather in the balance in comparison with my love for Hebe Bellenden.'

Herbert was silent. He never after this tried to reason with him. He knew that Geraint was as thoroughly persuaded of the folly of his own course as he was, and that reason or warning would be worse than useless.

Spurway had changed his rooms again at the beginning of the term, and had migrated into a magnificent suite of rooms in Neville's Court, so Brown had returned to his old quarters. He brought a very modest amount of goods and chattels back with him on this occasion. Remembering the uncertain tenure by which he held his position there at all, with Mr. Routh's threat, like the sword of Damocles, perpetually hanging over his head, perhaps it was wise to do so.

The humiliation of that last exodus, when even his lamp and his coal-scuttle were sent after him, the new tenant declining to take them, was too fresh in his mind for him to bring anything with him that he could possibly do without. There were no photographs of Maria on the walls, and there was, alas ! no carpet on the floor ; but there was a capital Windsor chair, and a lot of books on the floor, that looked like work.

He went to chapel the first morning with Herbert, and his braces did not provoke any expostulations from the Dean ; and he turned up again, a little late, twice during the week, and then came a long break.

His intentions were excellent ; but as he never got out of bed until the chapel bell had ceased ringing, he hadn't the chance of carrying them into effect.

Herbert was a prey to a good deal of uneasiness on his account. Brown was always a trouble to him. Perhaps this was the reason he loved him, on the same principle that a mother always loves the ailing child of the family, who gives her more trouble than all the rest put together. She can better spare them than the cripple who has always been a care and an anxiety to her.

That bill of Grinley's was falling due shortly, and Brown had made no preparation to meet it. Unless it could be renewed it meant ruin. It had been renewed once, and the interest tacked on to it, and it would be due again in a few weeks.

Brown, who habitually took a cheerful view of things, was always expecting something to turn up. His easy nature led him to put off the evil day until it was upon him. He never disturbed his mind with anxieties and regrets until he was actually suffering for the follies he deplored.

But as the evil day drew nearer, and nothing had turned up wherewith to meet it—some old bills had turned up, which the Cambridge tradesmen had considerately sent in when they discovered that Brown had returned, but no ship had come sailing up the Cam and anchoring in the Backs laden with specie, consigned to Brown of Trinity.—his cheerful face began to grow long and gloomy. That is, it did at breakfast, where he was utterly despondent. After lunch he was more hopeful. At tea, especially in other men's rooms, where the fragrant herb may have had a finer flavour, he brightened considerably ; and after Hall his pleasant face was as round and as cheerful as ever.

Grinley passed by Herbert's staircase now, when he went to Spurway's rooms, and he generally passed by on the other side of the quad. There was a decided coldness between him and Geraint, and there were no other men on the staircase worthy of his attention.

He met Brown one day in the quad soon after he came up, and inquired with an air of tender concern if he had made any preparation to meet the bill. Brown replied that he hadn't, and as far as

he could see, that he was not likely to, and begged Grinley to arrange with his friend for its renewal when it became due.

'It is not held by any friend of mine,' Mr. Grinley replied stiffly; 'It was purely a business transaction with a money-lender. I only undertook it to oblige you, Brown. I am very sorry that I did so, as it has not been met. I cannot give you any further assistance. I can only advise you, as a friend, to have the money ready by the time.'

And so he went his way humming an opera air, and familiarly capping the tutor and the Dean, who happened to be crossing the quad. He stood so well with the authorities, whether of his own college or the University, and was a personal friend of the Sub-proctor.

He had never got mixed up in any disreputable proceedings; he had never been in a row, or given the college authorities any trouble whatever all the time he had been up. He kept his chapels when other men were in bed, and attended lectures with a regularity that won him the good opinion of the Professors; and his gates—well, that was a matter between him and his landlady. He had never occasion to attend a levee at the Dean's to explain any irregularities.

Poor Brown felt like a black sheep beside this spotless lamb, that wore the time-honoured gown of King's. There was very little of Brown's gown left to wear. It was rent in twain up the back, and had a jagged fringe round the tail, that his friends good-naturedly said represented the battlements of Trinity, with a battlement or two missing. And his cap was like the Queen of Sheba; it had no strength left in it, but hung down lump and dejected at each of the four corners. He crept back to his rooms under the severe scrutiny of his tutor, a very disreputable mote in the sunshine of the Great Court of Trinity in his ragged gown, and burst into Herbert's room. Harvard was there, and Jayne, who always received him with open arms.

He held his tongue, but he flung off his gown, and sat moodily by the fire, and Herbert noticed presently that he began to shiver. 'Cold, old fellow?' he enquired, throwing the contents of the scuttle over the fire.

'N—o—o,' said Brown with chattering teeth; 'its no—o—thing, tha—a—nks.'

'But it is something, my dear fellow,' Jayne said, with some concern. 'Now, a cup of coffee would be just the thing.'

Brown smiled feebly.

'I kn—o—ow you hav—en't any bra—a—n—dy, but Geraint——' he said, looking at Herbert.

'All right,' said Herbert; 'I know where he keeps it;' and he flew down over the staircase to Geraint's rooms, presently reappearing with a liqueur-bottle and a glass.

'Now, old man!'

He had poured out the brandy, and was holding it to Brown's trembling lips, when Harvard came up and put it quietly aside.

'Hold on!' he said; 'that's the devil's remedy. He always tempts a fellow when he's weak. I'll tell you the best cure for the shivers. Have a turn with the gloves, Brown?'

Now, Brown was a great hand at sparring. It was one of the few things that he could do well. If there had been a Tripes in that line, he would have taken very high honours.

His eyes brightened in a moment.

'Have you got any glo—o—ves?'

Herbert made another raid on Geraint's belongings, and brought up a couple of pairs of gloves.

They pushed aside the table, and made a clear space in the centre of the room, and the men stood up. Brown was out of training, and Harvard had the advantage of several inches of arm, besides being a much heavier man. It was all Brown could do to keep on his legs. Harvard withstood his rushes like a stone wall, and Brown fairly winded him-self in his futile efforts to get at him. In a few minutes he was glowing all over with the exercise and excitement, and had long ceased to shiver.

Harvard laughed and threw off the gloves.

'Now,' he said, 'which is the best physic—the devil's or mine? Whenever you have a screw loose, old man, have a turn at the gloves. Never mind if you haven't anyone to set to with; have a go at the wall.'

Brown took his advice, and whenever anything went wrong with him sparred at an imaginary antagonist, in the form of a bolster he had set up against his wall. But no amount of sparring would ward off the evil day. When it was within approachable distance Grinley made him a very generous offer. He had gone over to Grinley's rooms to talk the matter over with him.

If he was out of pure kindness, he assured him, that he took this trouble on his account. He had no personal interest whatever in the matter. If Brown would tell him exactly his circumstances, he would advise him the best thing to be done. So Brown sat down, and poured out his simple story.

Of his present means he had nothing to tell. No generous allowance from the paternal coffers for the expenses incidental to a University career was his—only a small sum counted out carefully from that slender home purse that had so many claims upon it, at the beginning of each term. Of his future prospects there was little more to be said. There was the munificent sum of two hundred pounds, the legacy of a maternal aunt, coming to him when he attained the age of twenty-three years; and beyond this there was nothing for him to fall back upon, except, indeed, that little division which must come some sad—let us hope far-off—day, when the children in that humble vicarage should be dispersed, and should receive the portion that appertained to them.

It was not a very hopeful look-out for the holder of the bill. Of course, if Brown should be ordained there would be an immediate access of capital in that splendid stipend that he would receive as a curate.

Grinley's face grew darker as he listened to Brown's very straightforward account of his future prospects, which, to do him justice, he told without the slightest ostentation.

'You should have explained all this before the bill was drawn,' Grinley said severely. 'You have placed me in a very awkward position in introducing you to—to the person who advanced the money.'

Brown ventured to say that there was no one regretted it so much as he did, but Grinley checked him impatiently.

'It is too late to regret it now,' he replied coldly. 'I do not know what you think of the transaction, Mr. Brown; but it appears to me, under the circumstances, that you have raised this sum by very questionable means. It is impossible to say what view would be taken of it if it should happen to come into court; but gentlemen do not usually raise money by—pardon my plainness—by such fraudulent means.'

Brown's face had assumed a grayish tint at the suggestion of the matter coming into court, and at Grinley's last words it grew quite ghastly with mingled incredulity and horror.

'You—you don't mean,' he gasped, 'that it isn't all square!'

'It isn't square by any means, Mr. Brown, to borrow so large a sum of money when you have no means, on your own showing, of repaying it. It quite comes, I should take it, under the category of an intended fraud.'

Brown turned white to the lips.

'God forbid!' he groaned, moved quite out of himself by the terrible accusation; 'anything—anything but that!'

And then he recollected himself for a moment, and, with a certain dignity in the midst of his abjectness, he turned upon Grinley.

'You—you-yourself suggested it. I should never have thought of such a thing.'

'I did it to oblige you. My action in the matter was quite disinterested.'

'But you had the money,' Brown said feebly.

'I had the sum you were indebted to me, Mr. Brown,' Grinley said coldly; 'I advanced a large sum of money to save you from a disgraceful row. I paid your debts at Newmarket, and—and this is your gratitude!'

'I—I beg your pardon,' said Brown humbly; 'I am very much obliged to you, I'm sure; but I never thought it would come to this.'

'There is but one thing to be done,' Mr. Grinley resumed with grave deliberativeness, as if Brown's apology were quite beneath his notice; 'there is but one thing to be done, Mr. Brown, and that is

to pay the interest upon the amount until you are in a position to take up the bill. Now, for what length of time do you wish the bill to be renewed, if the party who holds it is willing upon these terms to renew it?"

Brown breathed more freely.

'Oh, if you would!' he gasped. 'In a year from this time I shall have come into that legacy, and then I can pay the remainder by degrees.'

'I will write to the holder of the bill,' said the other, with a coldly condescending air that nipped Brown's expressions of gratitude in the bud, 'and submit your proposal to him; but I am not at all prepared to say that he will accept it.'

A few days after this interview, Brown received a communication from Grinley to the effect that the holder of the bill had consented, in consideration of the sum of fifty pounds being paid as interest, to renew the bill for twelve calendar months—conditionally on the said sum of fifty pounds being paid on the day that the bill became due.

Brown received this communication with wholly unmixed feelings. He had long been a prey to foolish and unavailing remorse, but now that had given place to despair.

It was all very well for Grinley to talk about fifty pounds, but how was *he* to raise fifty pounds? He dared not apply to his father. He had already nearly broken the dear old fellow's heart, and drained his slender exchequer. He could not confide in his tutor: he had never yet gone to him in any perplexity, and Mr. Routh's cold, unsympathetic manner rather repelled than invited confidence. He had no one to confide in in his trouble but Herbert, who was younger and more inexperienced than himself.

Herbert raved, in his foolish, impetuous manner, more than Brown. He would have talked the matter over with Jayne and Harvard, or got Geraint to help him; but Brown was so proud, or shy, or haunted with a dreadful fear of the transaction, which he had now come to look upon as fraudulent and criminal, being known, that he bound Herbert down in the most solemn manner to keep his secret. And so he went on his sorrowful way, fretting his heart out as the awful day approached when the bill fell due, and being as powerless to provide the interest as he would have been to provide the principal, if Mr. Grinley had not used his friendly interest to induce the holder to accept these generous terms

CHAPTER XIX.

A RUBY NECKLACE.

GERAINT had altered wonderfully this term. A look of strong, settled serenity had taken the place of the air of indolent, cynical indifference that used to characterize him.

He had changed, but he had changed for the better.

He went to the house at Chesterton every night that Miss Bellenden received her friends; twice if not three times a week. Whether his visits were welcome or not he went, and allowed himself, no doubt, to be blackmailed like any ingenuous freshman. Herbert remarked, when he visited the house again, after a long absence, that there were none of the old set there. No men of their second year, only smooth-faced freshmen, who, with their term's allowance in their pockets, rushed greedily at the bait.

There were no lovely girl-undergraduates from Girton or Newnham waiting to be wooed in the soft, rosy light of Miss Bellenden's fairy lamps now. The society of the Myrtles, Chesterton, had changed since Herbert's last visit. The ladies' colleges were no longer represented, though there was a fair sprinkling of freshmen from nearly every college in Cambridge. Consequently, there was less music, and the real business of the evening being untrammelled, began earlier—an important consideration for men in their first year.

There was a great deal less coffee consumed, though it was still *en évidence*, but champagne flowed freely.

Julie came in rather late, and alone; Spurway was not with her. Miss Bellenden received her with her accustomed grace, and introduced her to Herbert as Madam Spurway.

'Oh, I forgot,' she said, checking herself. 'You are old friends; you come from the same county.'

Herbert blushed his reddest, but Julie was quite at her ease. She had such a delightful manner, wherever she had acquired it, and withal was so charmingly droll, that the foolish undergraduate forgot all about the trouble she had been the cause of, and his virtuous scruples about touching pitch, before the evening was half over.

Julie was pinker than ever—at least, her complexion was—and there was some wonderful pigment beneath her eyes that increased their brilliancy. She wore jewels on her pretty throat, and her bare arms, and her bosom; but bright as they were, gleaming on her white skin, and amid the laces of her rich dress, they were dim beside the living light that flashed from her sparkling eyes.

Hebe Bellenden, after the first cold greeting, kept apart from her; and Herbert thought he traced beneath the habitual coldness and indifference of her manner a veiled impatience of Julie's

presence there. Grinley was by her side, bland and smiling ; as looking at the two, seated side by side in the soft rosy light. Herbert could not help thinking how well they were matched.

Perhaps others thought so, too, for he saw a scornful smile curling the corner of Hebe's lips as she glanced across the table at Geraint. They were playing at the same table, with a few other men ; but most of the men crowded round Julie. She had admirers without end ; and she exerted all her little arts, that Herbert knew so well, to attract the foolish, innocent fellows. Grinley was her partner ; and the moths that fluttered round that attractive table had to pay dearly for the smiles she was pleased to bestow upon them.

Herbert, sitting moodily in a corner, dull and neglected, knowing nobody, watched the little games of cross-purposes that were being played before his eyes, in the position of a spectator who had the key to several mysteries.

He saw more clearly now than he had done on the occasion of his former visits. He had been behind the scenes, as it were, and had a private introduction to the skeleton of the Myrtles. It was rattling its dry bones now, but the buzz of talk drowned the unpleasant sound. There was—well, if not exactly a frown, which is not well-bred in receiving visitors—there were lines above Miss Bellenden's level brows as she glanced over to the table where Madam Spurway and Grinley had all the fun, and all the talk, and, as it happened, all the luck to themselves.

Not that Miss Bellenden could complain : her usual good fortune had attended her to-night ; but Hebe had been losing all the evening. She rose from the table presently, and pushed the cards from her wearily, and with what Herbert, holding the clue of several mysteries in his hands, thought an air of disgust and loathing, she went over to the piano.

Geraint whispered a few words to him as he sauntered through the room, and presently took the vacant seat beside the piano. In pursuance of Geraint's entreaty, Herbert got up from his corner and crossed over to the table that Hebe had risen from. He paused for a moment behind Grinley, and in that moment, when his neighbourhood was unsuspected, intercepted a flash of intelligence from Julie's bright eyes to her partner opposite. Herbert had seen that look before in another woman's eyes, and he recognised it in a moment. Julie had been an apt pupil.

He sat down somewhat unwillingly at the table, in Geraint's seat, and played sixpenny nap with the boys, until Geraint rose to go.

'How blind they must be!' he said to himself, as he looked across the room to the lovers at the piano. There was no mistaking the passion in Geraint's eyes as he bent over Hebe ; the flame that had smouldered all the evening had burst into a blaze now. Herbert was so sorry for him, but he could not help being touched

by that sacred fire that was shining in his frank blue eyes, in his under devotion to this woman who was so unworthy of him—at least, in Herbert's eyes.

And Hebe? Well, he couldn't see anything but her back hair. It was the loveliest hair in the world—every thread of it was living gold; but it was not expressive of any deep feeling.

Grinley rose presently, and asked Hebe to sing. There was a heap of songs on the piano, and Geraint picked out one and opened it before her. She was striking the first notes, when Grinley, with his shining smile and his shining teeth, stooped over her, and said a few words in her ear. She turned just a shade pale under her—her becoming colour, and put the song aside, selecting another from the heap.

Perhaps he was not so blind as he seemed.

Geraint rose at once to go, and Hebe said good-night without taking her eyes off the music before her.

'I have lost five shillings for you,' said Herbert ruefully, as they wended their way homeward in a decidedly disagreeable storm of rain and sleet. He had only his gown over his dress suit; and as undergraduates have a recognised law that umbrellas are wholly inadmissible, under any circumstances, with academics, the foolish fellow was entirely at the mercy of the elements.

He preserved his dignity, but he caught a cold.

'If you had lost five pounds I should have been delighted,' said Geraint gaily. 'Hebe has promised to come down to the river and see us start to-morrow; and there is something she has overheard about your friend Brown she wants to tell you, if you can get an opportunity of speaking to her on the bank. You'll have to dodge it—take an opportunity when Miss Bellenden is engaged. Couldn't you pretend to coach them in the technicalities of the race, walking with them up the bank, and then take your chance?'

'What can she know about it?' said Herbert.

'It is something important, I think, or she wouldn't be so much in earnest. I fancy Brown has been mixed up with Grinley in some shady transactions, hasn't he? Before he went down I mean?'

The wind was blowing unspeakably over Magdalene Bridge, and Herbert lost his cap and his dignity, too, in a race all through Bridge Street after it; and when he caught it up he was much too busy shaking the wet out of it to answer Geraint's question.

He went down to the river next day when the eights were out practising, and met the Miss Bellendens on the bank. Madam Spurway was there too; she had left her dogcart in the road, and was walking on the towpath in a severe tailor-made costume, with a coquettish little hat, and a fierce-looking bull-dog following at her heels.

This was not the first time that Herbert had met her on the towpath when the eights were practising. Julie was ubiquitous.

Wherever there were masculine eyes in sufficient numbers to admire her she was to be found. He saw her often enough driving through the town, with a bull-dog in front and a tiger behind, and at University matches and sports, where the female portion of the visitors gave her a wide berth. But she was not dismayed by the coldness of her reception. The cold shoulder was no strange joint to Julie. It had been the *pièce de résistance* of her youth.

Hebe Bellenden detached herself from the others, and, on the pretext of asking Herbert some questions about the crews, loitered with him for a few seconds on the bank.

'You have a friend, a Mr. Brown?' she said hurriedly. 'Tell me, has he any transactions with—with Mr. Grinley, that are causing him any uneasiness?'

'He has very serious transactions with Mr. Grinley,' Herbert answered in a low voice, bending down over her, but with his attention entirely concentrated on the river (Miss Bellenden had missed Hebe, and was looking round), 'that are causing him the greatest uneasiness.'

'Does he owe him money? Don't look at me; keep your eyes on the river.'

She was so absorbed by what was passing on the river, that she had raised her dainty little eyeglass, and was surveying some distant object through it.

'Yes.'

'How much?' She was so occupied with that distant object that she did not see Miss Bellenden's impatient gesture.

'Two hundred and fifty pounds—and interest.'

'When is it due?'

'To-morrow.'

'To-morrow!—so soon?'

'Yes; but there will be three days' grace. It might be three years so far as Brown is concerned. It is impossible for him to meet it.'

They were standing in a little knot of spectators, who were watching the boats turn the corner. It was a most engrossing spectacle, and Miss Bellenden's attention was diverted.

'What will he do?'

'He can do nothing. It means ruin.'

'Cannot his friends help him?'

'He dare not ask his friends. God knows, I would help him willingly, if I had the money. Fifty pounds would save him—would stave it off—for a year.'

'And he cannot possibly raise this?—Keep your eyes on the boats; point to them quickly—don't look at me.'

She was so eager in the interest she feigned that again she missed her sister's impatient summons.

'He cannot possibly raise it.'

'And he is your friend? I'm very sorry. You are looking at

me—see, they have turned the corner!’ and Hebe Bellenden hurried on to join her sister.

‘He is my dearest friend. He is the best fellow in the world.—Yes, they turned the corner splendidly. We are sure to make one bump, if not two!’

‘You will catch a cold standing about on the bank, Hebe, and you’ll be hoarse for a week. I didn’t know that you were so interested in the boats.’

Miss Bellenden spoke sharply. The wind was cold—one of those stiff north-easters which may be enjoyed any day in the early spring months on the Long Reach, where the wide fields on either side of the Cam stretch themselves as flatly as possible, so as not to offer any obstacle in the way of a good blow.

Herbert said nothing to Brown about this conversation. What was the use of it? He did ask himself what interest Hebe Bellenden could possibly take in Brown’s concerns, seeing that she did not even know him.

Geraint, all aglow from the boats, joined him on Midsummer Common. His frank face was flushed with the exertion, and his crisp, fair curls were tumbled with the wind, and his thin blazer served only to display the splendid proportions of his magnificent frame. He had a woollen scarf wound round his throat, but he had no overcoat, and he ran by Herbert’s side across the common and down Jesus Lane on their way back to Trinity.

‘Well,’ he said, as he panted by his side, ‘you saw her?’

‘Yes.’

Herbert had no hesitation in talking over Brown’s affairs with Hebe, but with Geraint it was quite another thing.

‘Well?’ he inquired.

‘Well?’ said Herbert.

He didn’t like to dissimulate with Geraint, but he was not at liberty to repeat the conversation.

‘Oh, I beg your pardon,’ said Geraint stiffly; that is, as stiffly as he could under the circumstances, with the wind in his teeth and out of breath with running; ‘I didn’t know there was anything private.’

Herbert would have explained or said something to pacify him if he had given him the chance; but Geraint turned into another man’s rooms in Jesus Lane, and he had to pursue his way back to Trinity alone.

He saw no more of Geraint that night, and Brown was so miserable and depressed that he didn’t go to Hall, and kept his oak sported all the evening.

Cudworth had met him during the day coming out of a chemist’s shop in the Petty Cury looking very white and flurried.

‘I didn’t like the look of him,’ said Cudworth, wagging his head with an air of grave concern, ‘so I just stepped in and bought

A FELLOW OF TRINITY.

some eau de Cologne, and asked casually 'what he had been up to. Now, what on earth do you think he wanted?'

'I'm sure I don't know,' said Herbert, turning white.

'Why, prussic acid, of all things in the world! Just as if chemists sold that over the counter like carbonate of soda! It strikes me there's something up with Brown; he ought to be watched.'

It struck Herbert so too. He remembered all at once that that miserable bill fell due to-morrow. His conscience quite pricked him for having left Brown alone so long, so with a beating heart he stepped over to Brown's door and thundered upon his oak.

It was one of their old signals when Brown lived in a state of siege, before the duns were paid off at such a fearful cost. Brown did not respond to the signal at once, and Herbert repeated it, while Cudworth stood by with an unmistakable look of alarm on his face.

The door was opened presently by Brown, who had groped his way to it in the dark.

There was scarcely any fire in the grate, and the lamp was not lit. The men lighted his lamp, and stirred up his fire into a cheerful blaze and made his kettle boil, and insisted on his drinking some coffee. His commons were on the table untouched for the day; and Cudworth suddenly remembered that he had had some wonderful potted turkey, 'that beat all the *pâté de foie gras* in the world to shivers,' as he expressed it, that had been sent to him from home; and he flew up the ladder-case to his garret and brought it down, and sat by singing ridiculous snatches of comic songs, while Brown made a substantial meal.

They waited till his old happy nature asserted itself, and his fit of the blues had quite disappeared, and then they went back, not without some trepidation, to their rooms.

'Good night, old fellow,' said Brown, when Herbert went away; 'there are yet two more days. Perhaps something will turn up!'

Nothing did turn up except the wettest and dreariest of February mornings.

There was not a sign of a sail on the Cam as it wound sluggishly through the Backs. There were thousands of ever-widening circles on its surface as the rain poured steadily down, but no barque from isles afar, with impatient keel grounding in the bank off Trinity.

No. Brown's ship had not come in during the night. And it didn't come in during that long dreary February day. He didn't go down the river to look for it, but sat in his rooms with his oak sported, looking gloomily out into the Great Court.

Herbert went over once or twice to see things were all right, and to pile up Brown's fire, which, cold as it was, he forgot to mend, but sat through the day in his solitary arm-chair, with his face buried in his hands, a prey to unavailing remorse.

The next day passed just as miserably, except that instead of rain there was a mist—a thick gray Cambridge mist blotting and blurring out all the familiar objects in the Great Court, the fountain, the hall, the chapel, and swallowing up the ghostly figures of the men as they hurried across it—a regular wet blanket over everything.

Herbert didn't care to leave Brown alone on the staircase, so he didn't go to chapel. The bell had ceased ringing, and the last surplice flying across the court had been swallowed up by the fog, and the night was closing in.

He had not lit his lamp, and he sat in the gloaming staring moodily into his fire, thinking of the little mother: he always thought of her at this twilight hour, of those happy days that seemed so long ago, when he used to burst in fresh from school; when the mists of that wet West-Country were creeping up from the river, and swallowing up all the little white town of Bideford—all but the dear old familiar cottage, where a fire blazed upon the hearth, and a table was spread with the simple fare, and a dear face beamed with the tenderest welcome!

He saw it all now, as he looked into the glowing embers. He heard the well-remembered accents of the dear voice that he had not heard for, oh, so long! when there came a low rap at his door and it slowly opened.

He saw it was a woman's figure, as he rose from his seat with a strange expectancy. Was it the little mother?

The room was so dark, and the lady was veiled, but the figure was familiar. She came hurriedly forward to the table where he was standing with his heart strangely beating. It was Hebe Bellenden.

'Miss Bellenden!' he exclaimed in a tone of surprise.

'Hush!' she said, raising her hand with a warning gesture. 'No one must know that I am here—that I have been here. I can trust you, Mr. Flowers; I have trusted you before.'

Herbert bowed his head, and waited for her to speak further, to explain this unlooked-for visit.

'Your friend, Mr. Brown,' she began nervously, and speaking in a low, hurried voice, 'is unable, you say, to—to meet a liability he has incurred; and the payment of the interest would give him time?'

She paused and looked up into Herbert's face.

'Yes,' he said sadly; 'it would give him time; but he cannot raise the money.'

'I do not know Mr. Brown,' she said softly, still looking at Herbert with an expression he had never seen before in her beautiful dark eyes; 'but he is a friend of yours, and he is in trouble.'

'He is in great trouble!' Herbert said gravely.

'I have no money; I would let him have it willingly if I had, for your sake, Mr. Flowers; but I have some jewellery that would

fetch something, that would nearly—nearly, if not quite, cover the amount. Will you, as his friend, sell it, or pawn it; any jeweller will lend you money upon it. See, the stones are real!

She opened a little case she had concealed beneath her cloak as she spoke, and flashed before Herbert's astonished eyes the ruby necklace that she had worn on that eventful night.

The fire leaped up into a sudden flame, and shone upon the gems that she held in her hand, every separate ruby flashing in the fire-light like a drop of blood.

Herbert remembered them quite well, and the scene, as it had so often done before, rose up before him.

'I—I do not think I am justified in—in accepting this sacrifice, Miss Bellenden,' he stammered, drawing back involuntarily from the proffered gift.

'It is no sacrifice,' she said impatiently; 'it is my pleasure to do it. Will you or will you not save your friend?'

'I have no choice if you put it in that way,' said Herbert humbly; 'but may I tell Brown who it is that has come to his assistance?'

'You will not tell Mr. Brown anything!' she said haughtily. 'It is for your sake, not for Mr. Brown's, that I take this unusual course.'

Her colour deepened as she was speaking, and her voice was tremulous, and Herbert saw that the hand that gathered up the jewels into the case trembled.

'I must not appear in this; and he—he must never know.'

She made a motion with her hand that Herbert quite understood as meaning Geraint, and if he had not, the tell-tale blush upon her lovely face would have told him.

'But who—where am I to say the money came from?' Herbert blurted out in the awkward way in the world.

'From wherever you like, Mr. Flowers,' she said, her eyes kindling and her cheeks flushing. 'It is not often one can repay an obligation so easily. I owe you more than I can ever repay you. If you will promise me that your friend shall never know where this money has come from, I am sure I can trust your honourable word.'

But Herbert did not promise her. He looked into her eyes; they were soft and tender, and wet with tears; and a mad impulse came over him to go down on his knees before her, now that this mood was on her, and beg her to spare his friend—to spare Geraint.

Did she read this purpose in his eyes?

She dropped her veil and gathered her cloak hurriedly around her.

'I have stayed too long,' she said; 'the men will be coming out of chapel soon. You will keep my secret, Mr. Flowers?'

She bowed her head haughtily with her old, cold, disdainful

manner, and walked over to the door. Herbert opened it for her, and went down the staircase with her. The organ was rolling out its final benediction, and the white-robed congregation was pouring out of the chapel door, but before it could reach across the Great Court the fog had swallowed up the retreating figure of Hebe Bellenden.

CHAPTER XX.

'LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION.'

'All within was noise of songs and clapping hands,
And boys that crashed the glass and beat the floor.'

It was already too late for Herbert to be seen in the streets of Cambridge without his academicals, and he hesitated to wear the gown of Trinity on this his first visit to a pawnbroker.

He knew exactly where to find one, for he had had serious thoughts more than once of raising money on the old coach's silver inkstand.

He went in modestly the next morning and requested to see the owner of the establishment. The young man in attendance, when he learned the nature of his errand, explained to him, with a severity of manner that was quite new to him in dealing with University tradesmen, that such transactions were conducted in an office round the corner.

Herbert found the door, and in the entry was confronted by a row of inner doors opening into separate loose-boxes. There was a tenant already in the one he entered. A woman with an infant in her arms was pleading hard for the loan of a half a crown for a little worn circlet of gold that lay upon the counter. It was the old story she was repeating—husband out of work, and children crying for bread.

'It's the last thing left, Mr. Jones,' she was saying when Herbert came in. 'Everything's gone, but by bit ; it's all we've got to live upon till my man gets about again. Make it half a crown !'

'Eighteenpence,' said the man—'not a penny more ; it's worn so thin that it's only fit for breaking up.'

'Two shillings, then !' she pleaded.

'Eighteenpence, for the last time ; now, will you have it or leave it ?'

He threw the money down upon the counter, and the woman took it reluctantly but greedily, with a dreadful hunger in her eyes.

Herbert opened the door for her to pass out, and as the east wind swept in from the street the child in her arms, so scantily protected from the cold by her thin shawl, began to cry.

It was Tommy's little brother,

Herbert drew back flushed and shamefaced, and laid the case with Hebe Bellenden's jewels on the counter.

'How much?' the man asked, eyeing the gems with provoking indifference.

'As much as you can lend me upon them,' Herbert answered modestly.

'How much?' he repeated impatiently; 'name your figure.'

'I want fifty pounds,' Herbert said, blushing in spite of himself.

The man laughed a little low chuckle.

'I'll tell you what I'll do,' he said, holding the rubies so that the light fell upon them; 'I'll let you have twenty-five pounds. Not a penny more.'

Herbert took the money, and a little cardboard ticket bearing his name and address, 'Flowers, of Trinity,' and went his way.

He was too new to the shame and shifts of poverty to give a false name and a false address.

He went up to Brown's room with a lighter heart than he had had for many a day, and a heavier pocket. He had never had so much money in his possession in his life before. Brown was sitting before the fire, with his face buried in his hands, and his breakfast untasted on the table.

He did not look up when Herbert came in.

'Hullo!' Herbert bawled out when he opened the door; 'cheer up, old man; your ship's come in!'

'My ship?' Brown repeated in a dazed manner.

'Yes; it's just come up the Backs. Now what do you say to that for a cargo?'

He took out the twenty-five sovereigns from his pocket in one big handful, and threw them down on the table before Brown. The gleam of the gold, the light in Herbert's eyes, the suddenness of the whole thing, took his breath away, and he sat staring stupidly at him across his untasted meal.

'Good heavens!' he exclaimed, 'where did it come from?'

'Never mind where it came from, old man; there it is, a loan from an unknown friend, that you can repay any day whenever you've got the money.'

'But I must know who I am indebted to,' Brown said nervously, looking at the shining heap with eyes of wonder. 'I—I really could not accept a loan under such circumstances. You haven't been talking of my affairs to anyone, Flowers?'

Herbert put on his most princely air.

'I have not spoken about your affairs to any man in Cambridge, Mr. Brown,' he said stiffly.

'Oh, come now,' said Brown humbly; 'I'm very sorry, I am sure; I didn't mean that, Flowers. I have been so upset lately I didn't know what I was saying. Of course I will take it, and gladly. I shall accept it as from you, and some day, my dear boy, when I get my first stipend, I shall repay it.'

He was quivering with emotion, and his simple face was glowing like coals as he counted out the gold on the table.

'I should go to Grinley at once,' said his Mentor, standing by, 'and offer him half a year's interest. Perhaps by that time you may see your way to take the accursed thing up, or find the money to renew it.'

'I'll go over after breakfast,' said Brown eagerly; 'you'll come with me?'

'No,' Herbert said, shaking his head decidedly; 'I'd rather not be mixed up in it. There is no need for you to tell him where the money came from; only mind and get a proper receipt.'

'Trust me for that,' said Brown gaily; 'I shall be as wise as a serpent by-and-by;' and his round face was beaming as if he had never had a care in his life.

Herbert didn't see anything more of Brown until night. Instead of his usual afternoon grind on the Trumpington road, he went with Jayne to Barnwell.

It was dingier and drearier than ever by daylight, and a February fog, that chilled one to the bone, rendered distant objects indistinct, and near ones more squalid and repulsive than ever. The fog had swallowed up all the towers and steeples of the churches, but it made the lights burning in the publichouse windows, behind the red curtains, more brilliant by comparison—a deep glowing red, gleaming like evil eyes out on the bleak waste of the long, flat, straggling streets. The smoke that had ascended from the many chimneys had been stopped half-way, and, mingling with the fog swooped down over Barnwell in a murky, visible, tangible atmosphere of pea-soup colour.

In this melancholy place they came across Harvard. It was too foggy on the river for the eights to be out, so he had given up the afternoon to his boys in Barnwell. His hands were empty, but Jayne's were full of tracts, which he had been leaving at poor houses that he had passed, wherever they would receive them.

He put them into his pocket when Harvard came up.

'He's a dear fellow,' he explained apologetically, 'but he doesn't like tracts.'

Herbert smiled. He was very much of Harvard's way of thinking; he hadn't much opinion of tracts himself, however nice and awakening they might happen to be. He had an old-fashioned belief that the nearest way to the hearts of men and women, and emphatically children, lay through their stomachs.

The great Teacher, who knew more about human nature than His disciples, recognised this fact when He made the famished multitude sit down on the hillside, and fed five thousand with that wonderful food that was consumed without diminishing. Depend upon it, His gracious message went home to the hearts of the men and women of old more readily after that miraculous meal than when they were exhausted with hunger by the way.

Herbert remembered the morning's incident, and the pinched face of Tommy's little brother. He told the story to the two men as they walked through the street that Poverty has claimed for its own. He didn't explain how it was he came to be there, to overhear the conversation; he left the men to draw their own conclusions. He was not the first undergraduate in Cambridge that had stood in need of pecuniary assistance; and there was no University chest now, as there was in old time, to advance money to needy students.

Harcourt was for finding the woman out at once, but Jayne stopped him.

'The fact is,' he said modestly, 'I've given her a shilling a week ever since the middle of last term; and if we can make it, between us, half a crown, and let her have it regularly, it'll be better than anything spasmodic and occasional.'

They made up the sum before they left Barnwell, Herbert promising his little weekly sixpence to the other men's shillings. It only meant in his case sixpennyworth of denial in one form or another; he hadn't arrived yet at that luxurious form of philanthropy that costs nothing. His expenses were already cut down to the lowest ebb. The daily round furnished more than he asked or desired—room and to spare for hourly sacrifices and denials.

Brown was not in his room after Hall, but Herbert met him later on in the evening in Geraint's room, which was the resort, not only of the men of his staircase, but of many other staircases in Trinity. He never had any need to ask his friends to wine in the usual ceremonious way; they came in unasked—'dropped in' as they termed it.

There was a post-prandial wine in Geraint's hospitable rooms every day, and cards—not unfrequently late into the night. The highest play in Trinity, which was saying a good deal, and the best comic song, which was, perhaps, saying more, were to be found here. It ought to have been a select society of rich men, but poor men had an unfortunate habit of 'dropping in.'

Brown had obviously no right there, with his slender purse, and his tears of remorse scarcely yet dry, and those repeated vows of amendment still fresh on his lips. Herbert may have thought so as he looked across the table and saw him playing nap with a blissful unconsciousness of wrong-doing.

He was looking so happy and eager, so entirely absorbed in the game, that Herbert thought, after the anxiety he had been a prey to during the past week, this little breaking out wouldn't do him much harm.

He hadn't the heart to take him away; besides, he remembered that Brown hadn't anything to lose beyond, maybe, a few loose sixpences.

Geraint begged him to sit down and take a hand, the stakes were very low, and he mechanically put his hands in his pockets. There

were no loose sixpences there. Nothing, indeed but his keys. He rattled them drearily, and went out. Clearly it was no place for him.

Later in the evening, after a couple of hours' work, he went over to his neighbour's room, but Brown was not there. His fire was out, and his lamp had burnt low ; but the room was empty.

He went back into his own room and stirred up his fire into a cheerful blaze, and sat down before it to wait up for Brown.

He waited up certainly, but he fell fast asleep in his chair, and was roused suddenly, it might have been hours after, by the slamming of the oak on the other side of the landing. 'He didn't know how long he had slept, his fire was out, and his watch had run down, and it was clearly too late to pay visits to his friends.

It was very shivery in that narrow inner college bedroom, and he hurriedly prepared to retire to rest.

There was an old-fashioned custom he still kept up, that worn strip of carpet beside his bed attested its regularity, and while kneeling there, very cold and sleepy, and by no means a prey to any excitement or alarms, a strange thing happened.

'Flowers ! Flowers !'

He heard the voice quite distinctly calling him. It was no strange voice, and it did not cause his pulse to quicken. He paused and listened, and finding all was quiet, repeated rather sleepily the old familiar petition of his childhood.

'Flowers !'

The voice was louder and more imperative, and he rose at once from his knees and went into the outer room. It was quite empty, and so was the landing beyond. He paused, looking down the dark staircase where the cold night air was coming up sharp as a double-edged razor. There was nothing else coming up or going down that Herbert could see, and he turned back shivering to his own room, when again he heard his name repeated.

'Flowers !'

The voice was at his elbow. It came from Brown's room.

And then a stranger thing still happened, which he could never explain. He did not knock loudly at the door as was his wont, but he went quietly over and tried it. It was fastened.

Some strange, inexplicable impulse made him creep noiselessly back to his own room and find the key of his oak. He had never tried it to Brown's door, and it was the most unlikely thing in the world that it would fit. His hands trembled with eagerness as he put it in the latch and turned it. It fitted perfectly, and the heavy oak door swung noiselessly back.

There was a thin line of light beneath the inner door, and as Herbert stood there, with an indefinable fear making his heart stand still, a faint metallic sound came from the room beyond.

Click !

His hand was already on the handle of the door, and he opened it noiselessly. But even as it swung slowly back there was a flash and a report that echoed awfully up the silent staircase.

Herbert had sprung forward—he never after knew how he did it. He covered the whole of the space from the door to the table, where the wretched man was standing with a revolver in his hand, in one leap, and knocked the dreadful thing aside, and it had gone off harmlessly. He was grappling with him in a moment, fighting fiercely for the possession of the weapon. Brown struggled with the madness of despair, and when Herbert closed with him and threw him on the ground, and wrenched it from him, the sweat gathered on his forehead in great drops.

They stood confronting each other—Brown ghastly pale with that cold sweat on his brow, and his breath coming painfully, and Herbert, white to the lips, but cool and determined, and with the cruel toy in his hand that he had wrested from him with death lurking in every chamber.

‘Oh, Brown!’ was all he could say.

The wretched creature covered his eyes and cowered before him. He put out his hand feebly as if feeling for the weapon. Herbert drew it away, but he took the cold, clammy hand in his and pressed it with an eager convulsive pressure.

It might have been lifeless now, never more to be pressed in love or friendship, but for his timely aid! He was too much moved to speak. And Brown?

Well, Brown was beaten; he threw his arms around his neck and wept upon his shoulder.

‘Thank God I was in time!’ Herbert said presently.

Brown groaned aloud.

‘A moment more,’ he said, or rather sobbed. ‘Oh, Flowers, why did you come?’

‘Hush!’ Herbert said sternly, ‘hush! remember in whose presence you stand. Good God, Brown, you might have been before His throne now!’

He led him sobbing to the sofa, and there, side by side, with Brown’s head on his shoulder, the poor fellow poured out the miserable story of his folly and his crime.

‘Oh, Brown, my poor, dear fellow, what possessed you?’

He could only sob upon his breast; his self-control was quite broken down.

‘How can I tell you?’ he moaned. ‘You will never—never forgive me, Herbert!’

He slipped from Herbert’s encircling arm as he spoke, and to his terror, indeed, he fell on his knees at his feet, with his poor trembling hands upraised.

‘Only here—here on my knees—can I tell you; only on my knees can I ask your forgiveness, my best and kindest friend!’

To see him kneeling there, with his ghastly face, and that look

of haggard, hunted helplessness in his eyes, gave Herbert a shock through all his frame.

'Not of me—oh, not of me! but of God ask forgiveness, my poor, dear fellow! Tell Him, not me, what temptation brought you to it—and—and ask Him, on your knees, for a way to escape from it.'

Herbert was sobbing now, and his hands were on Brown's shoulders, and he was bending down over him.

'What temptation? Oh, Flowers! I have lost all the money you brought me to-day. I lost it all to-night at cards!'

Herbert was silent.

Brown wrung his hands with a gesture of infinite remorse and despair that touched him more than his words.

'My life has been a life of mistakes, and now, to-night, I thought to retrieve the past. Fortune was favouring me, and I thought to win back the whole, and I staked it all at hazard—and lost!'

'And was that all?' Herbert asked with an air of relief.

'Yes,' he said despairingly—'enough, surely! I had no alternative. Ruin or death stared me in the face—and I chose death. Oh, Flowers, I could never, never face my poor father!'

'You did not think what this great sorrow, this disgrace, would have been to him,' Herbert said sadly.

He could not bruise the broken reed at his feet with reproaches; he could not quench that smoking flax of repentance that was flickering in Brown's soul, with a single word of reproof.

'God forgive me!' he said humbly. 'I did not.'

Herbert let him sob out his broken thanks to the merciful Hand that averted his thoughtless deed. And then he got his arms about him to raise him up; but the poor broken-down fellow only pressed the hand that was nearest to him, and hung over it and wept.

'I will never rise from my knees until you forgive me, Flowers!' he sobbed.

'Dear old man, I forgive you with all my soul!'

And then he suffered him to raise him.

'Now, Brown,' he said, when he was calmer, and he was leaving him for the night, when he had tucked him up, if the truth must be told, in the little bed in that narrow inner room, and had laid a cool hand on his burning forehead, that felt like a benediction, 'I am going to keep your secrets no longer. I have kept them too long. You want direction as well as forgiveness, and, please God, you shall have both.'

He went back to his own rooms, taking with him that ugly toy, within whose magic circle lay the mysteries of death and eternity. He remembered that interrupted prayer, and he finished it by his bedside, on the little worn strip of carpet; and again, with an overflowing heart, he recognised the infinite insight into human needs in that divine petition he had learned at his mother's knee, 'Lead us not into temptation.'

He repeated it again the next morning before he went to chapel, and the chapel-bell kept saying it as he crossed the Great Court, and the organ repeated it, and every familiar sound of the day whispered, 'Lead us not into temptation!'

Geraint was waiting for him at the foot of the staircase as he came in from chapel.

'What on earth were you and Brown doing last night? I thought the ceiling was coming in!'

Herbert had already told Brown that he was not going to keep his secret any longer. And then, sitting by Geraint's fire, with the French clock on the mantelpiece ticking off the solemn refrain that was ringing in his ears, he told him the story of Brown's trouble.

Geraint's fresh-coloured face was almost as white as Herbert's when he finished the story.

'Good God!' he gasped; 'to think that a man could come to that!'

He went over to his writing-table, and flinging his papers right and left, he took out his cheque-book.

'Now, Flowers,' he said, 'tell me the amount of that confounded bill.'

'Two hundred and seventy-five pounds, with the interest,' Herbert answered gloomily. 'I am going over after breakfast to see the Dean; and then—and then he must write to his father. There is no other way.'

Geraint whistled. He remembered that little scene with Brown *patronus* not a year ago. Herbert heard his pen travelling rapidly across the paper, but his mind was too full of that coming interview with the Dean to notice it.

'There,' said Geraint, rising from his seat, and laying a narrow strip of coloured paper down before him, 'there is another way!'

It was a cheque for two hundred and seventy five pounds.

Herbert couldn't believe his eyes.

'Oh, Geraint,' he said, 'this is very noble of you!'

'Not a bit of it,' said the other lightly; 'it is only paying off an old score!'

'I don't see how he is ever to repay you?'

'And if he doesn't, what then? He'll be my debtor instead of Grinley's, and there'll be an end to that confounded interest. Why didn't he come to me at first?'

'Why, indeed? He was too proud, or too shy; and, besides, if this bill transaction had got wind, and reached Routh's ears, he would have been sent down.'

'He could have trusted me,' Geraint said, with a smile as tender as a woman's curling his frank, full lips. 'There will be no need to tell the Dean now, Flowers—nor his father. I should like him to stand well with his governor; the poor old chap's had enough to bear.'

He flung away the end of the cigar he was smoking, and gazed thoughtfully into the fire.

'No ; if you think not,' Herbert answered reflectively ; 'but we must leave that to Brown : he seems in the mood to make a clean breast of it all.'

'And get sent down for his pains !' said Geraint shortly.

Herbert took the cheque up into Brown's room. Jayne was already there with him. Herbert had told him all the miserable story as they walked across the court to chapel, and he had gone straight up to Brown's room on his return.

Herbert opened the door without knocking, and a strange sight met his eyes.

The two men were kneeling at the table, where Brown's humble morning meal was spread, and open before them was a book which Jayne was reading. Herbert paused on the threshold and took off his cap.

'Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, that whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My name He may give it you.'

It was Jayne who was reading. He looked up when he heard Herbert's foot-step in the room, and stopped.

Herbert came forward, he never knew why he did it, with that pink cheque fluttering in his hand, and laid it upon the open pages of the Book.

Jayne read it on his knees, and thanked God humbly for it. Brown was too overcome to speak.

'Now, who says the days of miracles are over ?' Jayne asked a little later, when he came down over his garret stairs with his commons in his hands—he was going to have breakfast with Brown—and his face shining from that high communion in the upper chamber ; but he wist not, like the prophet of old, that his face shone as he repeated his benediction over the frugal meal.

Brown had gone down to Geraint's room directly.

'God bless you, Geraint !' he said with a quivering lip, and a mist before his eyes that made quite a rainbow of the colours in Geraint's blazer, 'you have saved my life ! Your help is more than gold to me ; it is life and honour ! It has saved me from ghastly trouble—from being hooted out of honourable men's company—from being sent down in disgrace—from breaking my old father's heart—from—from—you must know it, Geraint—from blowing my brains out !'

Geraint was very much moved by his broken words, and begged him to say no more. •

'I am very glad to have helped you, Brown,' he said humbly. 'God knows I am ; and I am very sorry that I and my thoughtless habits have been the means of leading you into temptation. I hope some day you will be able to forgive me, Brown !'

An hour later Jayne limped across King's Parade with Brown to

Grinley's rooms. Strange to say, the bill was in that gentleman's possession, and when he surrendered it to Jayne he remarked that it bore no official mark of having passed through a notary's hands.

Mr. Grinley was so good as to suggest that the document should be destroyed in the presence of the parties concerned, but Jayne was obdurate, and would not part with the money without it, and Herbert met him limping joyfully across the Great Court with the wretched bit of blue paper that had been the cause of all Brown's trouble in his hand.

'I tell you what,' he remarked to Herbert, with that strange light still shining on his worn face, 'I never knew of such a remarkable answer to prayer in all my life. We were on our knees asking for help and direction, and, to strengthen our weak faith, I was reading the promise, when the answer came—swift—sudden—direct! It was nothing short of a miracle!'

Late that night, when all the other men on the staircase had gone to bed, Geraint thundered at Herbert's door.

Herbert was in bed, too, but he got up willingly and let him in. 'I've found it all out,' Geraint exclaimed, bursting into his room; 'that villain Grinley was the holder of that accursed bill, and it was he that put the screw on and drove that poor devil, Brown, to the verge of self-destruction.'

When Herbert lit his lamp, he saw that Geraint had worked himself up to such a pitch of anger that his face was deeply flushed, and the perspiration stood out in great beads on his forehead.

'How did you learn it?' Herbert asked.

'Oh, you needn't ask. At Chesterton.'

'Did she tell you?' Herbert's lips did not ask the question, but his eyes did.

'Yes,' Geraint said, answering his thought. 'Hebe found out all about it. She knew all along that Grinley had deceived Brown, and led him on; but she did not know until the other day that he was your friend. There never has been any value received, except that paltry thirty-five pounds he let Brown have, and for which he was charging him fifty pounds a year interest. It was a gross fraud and deception from beginning to end, and to prevent its being found out he proposed to destroy the bill.'

'But he didn't,' said Herbert.

'Luckily he didn't,' said Geraint, lashing himself up by successive stages into a towering passion; 'we've got to thank Jayne for that. The fellow ought to be horsewhipped; he's not fit for the society of gentlemen. He ought to be ~~out~~ by every fellow in Trinity!'

'It won't do to make it public,' said Herbert; 'we must consider Brown. However shady it is, for his sake, at any rate, it must not be known.'

'The whole business ought to be laid before Grinley's tutor, and

he ought to be kicked out of King's. If the Provost got scent of it he would. 'Only to think, that I should have introduced him to my friends—that Brown should have met him in my rooms!'

There may have been another reason, broader and deeper, and underlying these that Geraint bewailed with so much energy, and that made his frank blue eyes blaze like coals of fire beneath his deep brows, but he never mentioned the name of Hebe Bellenden again in the matter. Herbert had never seen Geraint so moved before, and long after he had gone downstairs he heard him talking to himself in the room below.

There was a meeting held in Geraint's room the following day, and Herbert was asked to drop in.

When he dropped in Cudworth and Harvard were already there. The look with which they greeted him told him that they knew all. Harvard rose up on his entrance and held out his great hand. Herbert ignored the Cambridge rule that undergraduates should shake hands but twice in each term—once on coming up, and again at going down—and shook hands silently.

Cudworth came forward and went through the same dumb show.

Herbert knew exactly what they meant, as if they had spoken volumes.

'I knew yesterday, you know,' Harvard explained awkwardly. 'Jayne came over and told me; but I didn't know whether Brown would care for me to know, so I kept away till Geraint sent for me.'

Cudworth explained still more modestly.

'Fact is,' he said, with a curious moist twinkle in his eye, 'I heard the report, and I guessed there was something wrong with Brown, and I came down; but when I saw you two fellows blubbering away on each other's shoulders I saw I wasn't wanted, and I crept upstairs again. Best fellow in the world is that fellow Brown, but the most unmitigated ass!' This was added to relieve his feelings.

As there was no dissentient voice to this last statement, the business of the meeting was resumed.

Whatever that business was, it made Herbert look very grave, and he declined to have anything to do with it.

It might be very heroic, and doubtless it would have relieved his feelings, but considering the risks it involved, and thinking of the little mother at home, he felt that it would be heroic no longer, but a very selfish and headstrong piece of folly.

He thought it right to remind others what risks they were running. They would, at the very least, be sent down if it came to the ears of their tutor, and it was bound to make a scandal in the 'Varsity.

Geraint pooh-poohed it in his most magnificent manner, and he could afford to do so. It was a matter of indifference to him

whether he stayed up or went down, with that future that he had planned for himself in view. It would only, in any case, hasten the catastrophe he desired; but with the others it was different. It meant rustication to them if they were found out, and making their friends miserable, and losing a year at their professions, and handicapping themselves generally at their first start in life.

Harvard measured the subject all round as he stood propping himself up against Geraint's wall, with his great hands in his pockets. 'I would rather stand up to him alone, single-handed,' he said, 'in a fair fight; but the odds would be against him even then. Honesty *versus* Roguery: rogue *must* go to the wall. No, hang the risks! I'm your man. Depend upon it, right'll come uppermost!'

'I'm in the same boat,' said Cudworth; 'we can do without Flowers here. He's done his part splendidly already!' and he looked as if he would like to shake hands with Flowers over again.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE FOUNTAIN OF KING'S.

'Here they are. Upon them boldly!
Double quick across the grass!'

THE conspirators did not appear at Hall. Brown, who was unconscious of the vengeance to be wreaked on his behalf, was quite concerned at Cudworth's absence, as they usually met at the same table.

Herbert, after the manner of the men of Trinity, ate the best dinner in Cambridge in less than fifteen minutes, and slipped unnoticed out of the hall.

It was a dark night, though the moon was nearly at the full. Beyond the dark, serried line of King's Chapel there was a ribbon of clear sky, and above that piled-up mountains of clouds, behind which the moon was hidden. There was a melancholy wind moaning round the quadrangle, and a soft mist, it might be of ruin, was falling.

It was not a night to be out in by choice, and the men coming out of Hall drew their gowns around them, and hurried across the court. The great hall was brilliantly lighted, and the light streamed out from the great mullioned windows across the grass; but the doorway was enveloped in shadow. Still, in spite of the darkness, Herbert saw, or fancied he saw, three dark figures lurking behind a buttress.

Even as he came up the door opened, and a man came out alone; the light of the lamp fell upon his face for a moment before he emerged into outer darkness. It was Grinley.

But it was no longer three figures, but four, that were struggling silently on the grass of the court. There was no sound except a

suppressed oath as the struggling figure was hurried across the grass in the direction of the fountain. Herbert saw that he was struggling violently, but ineffectually, in the grasp of the men who were hurrying him along ; and presently there was the sound of a great splash, and he comprehended that they had ducked Mr. Grinley in the fountain of King's.

There was a fierce oath and a suppressed cry, and the black drenched figure struggled to the brink. Several men who had seen the scuffle hurried with Herbert across the sacred grass to the scene. But before they could attempt a rescue, Geraint's voice rang out clear and stern, 'Again !'

They seized him again, and again, in the arms of that self-constituted vengeance, the wretched man was plunged beneath the black, icy water of the fountain of King's.

He rose more dead than alive, and Herbert, with that foolish heart of his, that never could see any living creature suffer, whether friend or foe, came to the rescue, and helped him out of the water.

Grinley could not stand when he got him to the bank, and he staggered and would have fallen if Herbert had not given him his arm, and led him away, wet and shaking in every limb, from the scene of his just punishment and disgrace.

Herbert led him back to his rooms with his legs trembling beneath him, and breathing out frightful curses between his blue lips. When he got him indoors, he had to wait on the stairs, half-way up, to recover his breath, and left a dark, dreadful pool behind him where he had been standing.

He got him up to his rooms presently, faint and sick ; and he reeled into a chair like a drunken man.

He motioned to Herbert where to find some brandy ; and when he put it to his lips, he heard his great white teeth chatter against the glass.

'I know two of the men,' he muttered, between his blue lips, with a dreadful malignity in his eyes, that made Herbert shiver ; 'but I don't know the third.'

'He is a friend of Brown's,' Herbert said gravely ; 'they are all friends of Brown's, and, quite without his knowledge, have espoused his cause.'

'They will have to pay for this night's work ; they will have to pay for their friendship !' he muttered savagely, between his shaking teeth.

His dog was fondling upon him, and licking up the water that fell from his trembling limbs. The dumb creature was as much distressed and concerned as his master.

'They are quite prepared to take the consequences of their act,' Herbert said gravely ; 'nevertheless, for your sake, as well as theirs, I am very sorry it should have happened. You did me a kindness once, Mr. Grinley : you saved me from a gambler's fate.'

He left him, and went down the stairs, and the mendacious cur followed him to the top, and growled a parting anathema after him.

Quite early the morning following, two of the conspirators in this summary act of vengeance were requested to call upon their tutor. By a curious coincidence Jayne limped across the court at the very moment that they were closeted with Mr. Routh, on an errand of a private nature to the Dean.

These two gentlemen subsequently discussed the unprecedented occurrence with the gravity befitting the occasion, and the result was that Geraint was requested by Mr. Grinley's tutor to pay a visit to him during the morning at his rooms in King's College. Geraint took certain documentary evidence with him, and, after a rather lengthy interview, had the honour of shaking hands, with unmistakable heartiness, with that urbane and chivalrous-minded gentleman.

The result of this hand-shaking was ominous to Grinley. His seat was vacant at chapel, and his place was empty in Hall; and a dreadful rumour ran round the courts that Grinley had been sent down. Not rusticated for a year, but ignominiously sent down.

All sorts of strange things followed Mr. Grinley's summary dismissal. The Dean shook hands with Brown in the ante-chapel, and invited him to call upon him in his rooms the following day. The Master, rustling through the Great Court in the stiffest of silk gowns, met Herbert at the door of the Lodge, and carried him in to pay his respects to Mrs. Howell.

He had not seen that lady for some months. Her kind face was no longer seen in the stalls beneath the organ-loft, and Herbert had heard incidentally that she had been ill. He was not at all prepared for the change in her, and he showed on his candid face the shock her changed appearance had given him.

She gave him her hand—such a thin white hand—and whispered to him as he bent over her sofa:

'I know all about it, Mr. Flowers. Thank God you were in time!'

'You must not excite yourself, my darling,' the Master interrupted, laying a strong hand tenderly on her slender wrist. 'I brought him in because I knew you would like to congratulate him, and express our warm approval and thankfulness. He will value it more from you.'

Mrs. Howell still held Herbert's hand.

'You hear what our dear Master says,' she whispered; her voice was very low and weak, and Herbert had to bend over the couch where she was lying to catch her words. 'I do indeed congratulate you most warmly; and in the name of his friends, his father and mother, I thank you, Mr. Flowers!'

She let go his hand, and lay back on the pillow, and Herbert saw

a tear stealing from beneath her closed lids, and trickling down her worn face.

He did not know till then that Lilian Howell was in the room. She came forward softly from behind the couch, and leant over the sofa.

'Dear aunt,' she said, 'this interview is trying you. Mr. Flowers will come another day.'

Herbert rose to go, but the sick lady beckoned him to her side; he looked irresolutely at the Master and at the door, but he shook his head and smiled.

'You must humour her, Mr. Flowers. Now, my darling, I will give you just five minutes, and then——'

The Master took out his big gold watch, and held it up to the light.

'And then?' she repeated with that tender, trustful smile that irradiated her lovely worn face like an inner light. 'And then we will say good-bye!'

Herbert looked from one to the other. The light that shone on her face was reflected back by the Master's, and in that light the great, good, strong face was as tender and soft as a woman's.

He stood by her side while she spoke to Herbert, with his hand lightly resting on hers.

'There was a voice,' she said softly, looking from the Master's face to Herbert's, 'that summoned you.' I have heard all about it. Whose was the voice?

She spoke in a hushed, reverent tone that brought back to Herbert, all at once, the strange sensation of that eventful night.

'I cannot say. It was a familiar voice.'

'Very familiar?'

'No; not very familiar. A voice I have heard, and should know again.'

'You have heard it before?'

'Yes, oh yes; I am sure I have heard it before.'

'Think!' She was very much in earnest, and there was a deep yearning in her bright dark eyes—so very, very bright now against the pallor of her cheeks, as she looked from Herbert to the Master, who was watching every change in her face with such tender wistfulness. 'Was it your mother's voice that spoke?'

It flashed upon Herbert all at once.

'No. Oh no, no! It was—I am quite sure it was—Brown's poor old father's voice. I can remember it now quite distinctly.'

'Oh, thank God, thank God!' exclaimed the poor lady, looking up into the Master's face with that wonderful light shining through her tears. 'It was his father's love that saved him. Think, dearest, if love could pierce the veil *now* what will it do hereafter? Oh, my darling, my darling! there will be no real separation!'

She had forgotten all about Herbert, and was sobbing over the Master's hand.

Herbert did not need to look at the watch the Master held up with a warning hand as he crept humbly from the room. Lilian Howell followed him, and closed the door upon the sacred scene.

'I am so sorry to see Mrs. Howell so ill,' he said, as he stood with her at the head of the wide staircase. 'I am afraid my visit will have tired her.'

'She wished to see you ; she has been talking about you all day. I am glad you have seen her, Mr. Flowers. You will never see her again !'

She turned from him with a catch in her voice, and her eyes wet with rising tears ; but she did not hold out her hand to him.

He never saw the Master's wife again ; but he sometimes overcame his natural diffidence to stop Lilian Howell on the chapel steps and ask after the invalid.

The first time he did so she allowed him to walk with her to the gate of the Lodge.

'I cannot tell you,' she said softly, when she had drawn him away from the crowd of men coming out of chapel in the eager, impetuous way in which the men of Trinity return from their devotions ; 'I cannot tell you how much your visit has comforted my aunt. You have cleared up a doubt. You have made the parting easier.'

She never gave him her hand, but she didn't look above his head now when he met her in the quad ; and once or twice she stopped him, in those dark, dull February mornings, to tell him news of the invalid.

'Worse ! Oh, so much worse, Mr. Flowers !' answering the question in his eyes that she had read there all through the service—she had no business to be looking at his eyes. The Prayer-book on the velvet cushion before her was big enough, in all conscience.

Herbert never failed at morning chapel ; she might come, and he not be there to receive her message.

Brown used to come to morning chapel, too, after that visit to the Dean. Not that the Trinity Lily was any attraction to him, such a sad, slender white Lily as it had now become, pressed down with the weight of all this sorrow.

'Nice girl, that !' said Brown one day when his friend had left the Master's niece at the door of the Lodge, as if he had just made a discovery.

'Yes,' said Herbert meditatively—'very !'

Brown hadn't recovered yet from the cruel agony of Maria's dismissal. The wound was still too raw in that faithful heart for him to set up any other divinity in the empty shrine. The image of the false one was still photographed upon his soul—the other photographs he had been requested to return—and Venus herself would not have had a chance against the poor faithful fellow's tender memory of his lost Maria.

It was no wonder that Herbert misinterpreted the object of his admiration when he remarked to him, as they crossed the Great Court in front of the Lodge one evening after Hall, when the lights were shining in a window that Herbert knew well :

'That girl's an angel !'

'Yes,' said Herbert, 'no doubt ; but I wouldn't think about her if I were you. There are quite as good fish in the sea, my dear fellow, as ever came out of it. I shouldn't be surprised now if there isn't a wife worth a dozen Marias waiting for you somewhere, Brown.'

'I didn't mean *her*,' said Brown, laying his hand upon his heart as if it were Maria's mausoleum ; 'I meant that angel singing in the stalls. She came up to me in the ante-chapel to-day in the most surprising way, and—and actually asked me to come over and see the Master's wife, who had heard about—about—about that night—and wanted to see me. Just fancy her wanting to see me !'

And Brown's poor, weak, emotional face was quite a sight to see, it was working so strangely in the lamplight.

But Herbert didn't see it ; he was looking up at the window where the light was burning, and at a shadow he knew well that was cast upon the blind.

'Did you go ?' he said.

He was thinking of his own visit and of that gentle sufferer, and of the great sorrow that was hanging over the household at the Lodge.

'Yes, certainly. But I didn't know Mrs. Howell was dying. "You must tread softly," she said when we came to the door of the room. If I had known what I now know, I should have taken my shoes from my feet, for if any ground is holy in this world it is that upper chamber.'

'I thought Mrs. Howell was too ill to see anybody,' said Herbert.

He was feeling a little slighted that she hadn't sent for him.

'She was much too ill to speak to me, but she took my hand in hers, and made me kneel down beside her bed, while Lillian—she called her Lily—kneelt on the other side and asked God to consecrate the life that He had preserved by such special means to His use and service. I have promised her to work for Him, and not for myself ; to do His will, and not my own, for all the rest of my life. Oh, Flowers, how am I to do it ?'

'This is consecration indeed,' said Herbert.

'Yes, entire consecration,' Brown said softly under his breath.

'And you are in earnest for once, Brown ?' Herbert said, as they stopped in front of the Lodge, and looked up at the window from which the light streamed across their path on the grass.

'I am indeed ; God knows I am !' said Brown, uncovering his head ; and his weak face looked strong and noble in that clear light.

'If there are any angels on earth,' he said softly, with the light

shining on his face, 'they are in that upper room ; and, God helping me, I will keep my promise to that saint. She is nothing less than a saint, Flowers. She showed me in those few moments, while I knelt beside her bed, with her little transparent hand in mine, that—that I am no longer mine own. His life henceforth—not poor miserable Dick Brown's, who was always breaking his old father's heart, and making his mother and sisters blush for him !'

CHAPTER XXII.

AN UNREASONABLE ATTACK.

MR. GRINLEY had gone down. But he had not gone very far. He had only gone to Newmarket, and established himself, and all his æsthetic belongings, in very fine rooms indeed, in that happy hunting-ground of bookmakers and *bas noirs*.

It was quite sufficiently near for him to drive into Cambridge after dark—he never came in in the daylight—and it was rumoured that he had been frequently seen in the neighbourhood of Chesterton.

La Maison Bellenden was closed ; at least, for a season. The little innocent 'At Homes' were at an end ; and when Geraint drove up to the door he was refused admission. The little pink notes ceased suddenly, and a dreadful suspicion racked his mind, that Hebe was a prisoner.

His suspicions were confirmed before the end of the week. A note, written on the fly-leaf of a book, was brought to his rooms by a lad who delivered milk at the house, and whom Hebe had bribed to be her messenger.

'I am so miserable,' she wrote ; 'I am more than miserable—I am in despair. How can I tell you ? I am to be married to Grinley next week ! He has got a license, and my things are being prepared. It is his way of repaying you for your noble act.

'They have found all my letters and—he has read them ! I think, if I had a knife, I could kill him. Isabel keeps the keys of all the doors, and she has hidden away all my writing materials. Oh, my darling, what can I do ? He is coming to night. A week hence—unless you prevent it—I shall be his wife !'

Geraint was like a man possessed after reading this incoherent epistle. He was for doing all sorts of wild things. He would storm the house, and carry off by brute force his imprisoned love. He would challenge Grinley to mortal combat. He would enlist the strong arm of the law to protect the liberty of the lovely subject.

But he did nothing of the kind.

He stumbled his familiar way up the college staircase, and burst into Herbert's room.

Herbert was sitting by his fireside, with a little black book in his hand, which didn't look like a classic, though it was the most ancient book in the world; and when he looked up from it and saw his visitor, he hid it guiltily away on the couch by his side.

Jayne was sitting with him, and had a similar volume in his hand—a much more bethumbed, shabby little book; but he didn't put it behind him. He made room for Geraint by the fire without rising, and he came over and stood between them with his back to the cheerful blaze, and his hands in his pockets.

His face was clouded, and there were unusual lines of care on his open forehead, and his lips were tightly drawn. Both men looked up at him with surprise.

'What's up?' Herbert asked bluntly.

'A great deal's up!' Geraint muttered, looking somewhat dubiously over to Jayne.

'Oh,' said Jayne, rising hurriedly, 'perhaps I'm in the way. I was going presently. I'll come in again by-and-by, Flowers;' and he began to limp away to the door.

'You'll do nothing of the kind,' said Geraint abruptly; 'sit down, and don't make a fool of yourself, Jayne!'

Thus politely adjured, Jayne resumed his seat.

'The fact is,' said Geraint bitterly, 'it's that infernal scoundrel, Grinley, taking his revenge. And on whom do you think he's taking it? Not on the men who served him as he deserved to be served, but on a weak, defenceless woman.'

'On Hebe Bellenden?' Herbert changed colour involuntarily as he asked the question.

'Yes,' he answered with an oath, and grinding his heel into the very tenderest portion of Herbert's worn hearthrug; 'on Hebe. He proposes to do her the honour to lead her to the altar within a week, and all the preparations for the wedding are being made.'

'And is not the lady willing?' Jayne inquired with an air of mild interest.

'Willing? The lady hates him like the devil hates holy water!' Geraint replied impatiently.

'Why, you surely don't mean that she is being compelled to marry him against her will?' he inquired in a tone of concern.

'It's a thing impossible to explain. There's some confounded conspiracy, and she's the—the unfortunate victim of it.'

'Oh!' said Jayne, his face suddenly growing grave, and all the warmth going out of his voice, 'oh, I didn't know that people plotted and conspired nowadays! I didn't know that young ladies could be married against their will. What is the object of the conspiracy? Has the—er—young lady vast wealth?'

'She has not a penny in the world!'

'Connections, perhaps?'

'She has no connections but blacklegs and card-sharpers,' Geraint replied impatiently.

'Not a very desirable person, I should think,' said Jayne, shrugging his shoulders with an expressive gesture; 'not at all a likely person for anyone to plot or conspire about. Are you sure you have got hold of the right end of the story? Are you sure that the lady has not reasons of her own for—for romancing, we will say?'

'I do not think you understand the situation,' said Geraint haughtily. 'I do not think you know that I am engaged to marry the lady in question.'

'Good heavens my dear fellow! I'm sure I beg your pardon. Do I understand you that Miss—h'm, Belle—Bellenden—thank you—is being coerced into marrying Mr. Grinley? That your addresses have been accepted by the—er—young lady herself, and rejected by the young lady's people?'

'The young lady hasn't got any people—an elder sister excepted.'

'And she is not agreeable to the match; she does not favour your suit?'

'She has never been asked,' said Geraint grimly.

'Oh, I'm afraid I don't understand the situation at all, then,' Jayne said coldly, rising from his seat.

'I don't think Geraint himself understands it,' said Herbert, looking round from the fire where he was filling his teapot; 'the fact is, there's a confounded mystery at the bottom of it that he hasn't unravelled yet. Oh, hang it!'

This last objurgation was addressed to the tea-kettle he was holding, the water from which he had been pouring over his hand instead of into the teapot.

Jayne came over to the rescue, and took it from him, and Herbert took occasion of the accident to whisper to him:

'Stay! for Heaven's sake, stay! You may save him yet! Oh, thanks; it isn't anything to speak of;' and he turned his attention to pouring out the tea.

Jayne looked very uncomfortable, and cast a longing glance over at the door, as if he still meditated flight.

'You *must* cut some bread and butter, Jayne,' said Herbert, intercepting his glance half-way; 'a fellow can't do anything with a hand like this;' and he held up his scalded hand, upon which a fine blister was rising.

Jayne slid uncomfortably into a seat, and proceeded meekly to cut the bread and butter.

Geraint was still standing in front of the fire, staring gloomily at the opposite wall.

'A mystery, you were saying,' said Jayne, nervously returning to the subject. 'Is the mystery connected with the—er—young lady, or with her *fiancé*, Mr. Grinley?'

Geraint winced at the word.

'With both,' he said gloomily.

'Oh, indeed, and they have not honoured you with their confidence?'

'I—I have never asked her,' he answered with a sudden light breaking over his gloomy face, and his frank eyes full of tender, generous trust. 'I have nothing to do with her secrets. If there is anything that—that it is right I should know, she will tell me some day.'

'Some day!'

Herbert repeated the words involuntarily; he was thinking of that ever-to-be-remembered night, and was asking himself the question, whether, if she were silent, he ought to speak. He remembered his oath, and sighed.

'Yes,' Geraint repeated, 'some day!'

His lips were smiling, and all the hard lines had disappeared from his face. Herbert looked appealingly across the teapot at Jayne, who was growing more and more uncomfortable.

'As Miss—Belle—Bellenden—thank you—is an unwilling party to the proposed marriage with our very undesirable acquaintance, Mr. Grinley, I presume that he exercises some unduly-acquired influence over her and her sister in order to bring about the consummation of his wishes.'

Jayne was very red and dreadfully uncomfortable, and had a horrible conviction that he was taking an unwarrantable liberty.

'You've about hit the right nail on the head,' Geraint said laconically.

'And you do not know the nature of this influence?'

'I have not the remotest idea.'

'Don't you think you ought to know?' said Herbert.

He could keep silence no longer. He could not see him hurrying on to his fate and be silent.

'I have perfect confidence in Hebe. Whoever else is guilty, she is innocent.' Grinley will have no influence over her when she is my wife.'

'And you propose to make this lady your wife,' said Jayne nervously; 'to introduce her into your family with—with this matter, the secret of this man's influence over her, unexplained?'

'That is my intention.'

Geraint spoke these words very quietly, but with a grave determination in the tone that made his two friends exchange glances across the table.

'Have you a mother?' Jayne asked quite inconsequently.

Geraint nodded his head gravely.

'And sisters?'

Again he nodded assent.

'And you propose to introduce to these ladies, into the closest companionship, into the tenderest intimacy, the *fiancée* of a

scoundrel who has been turned out of the University, and with whom she will carry into the bosom of your family a secret understanding !

'Stop, for Heaven's sake !' said Geraint. The sweat was standing on his brow in great beads, and his face was painfully flushed. 'I have counted the cost, and—and I am quite prepared to meet it.'

Herbert groaned, and covered his face with his blistered hand.

Geraint looked from one to the other. He was touched by the pity and the concern that were too painfully manifest on the faces of the men of whose friendship he was well assured.

'I see you will not help me,' he said.

'Heaven forbid !' said Jayne earnestly. 'Oh, my dear fellow, have you ever known the love of a pure, good woman ?'

'I have known the love of the best woman in the world, and I have rejected it for the sake of Hebe Bellenden,' interrupted Geraint bitterly.

'God help you ! If you have known this—this beatitude—it is nothing short of it—my poor words will be of no avail. Pause before you take this irrevocable step ; think of the years that lie before you, with—you must bear with me now—with this woman ever at your side, who, on your own showing, is neither noble, nor pure-minded, nor unselfish—'

'You have no right to assume this,' Geraint interrupted. His face had grown very pale while Jayne was speaking, with a hard, haggard defiance upon it.

'I do not assume it ; it is self-evident. If this woman, with all her vices—you must bear with me this once, if I speak plainly,' Jayne continued unmoved—'were not selfish, cruelly selfish, she would not accept this sacrifice on your part. She will change with the years, as all soulless lower natures change—you must still bear with me—and the days will come when the beauty, or whatever the special allurements may be that you have chosen her for, will drop from her, and she will allure no longer. Think of the barren years—of sickness may be, of sadness must be—when her changed face will ever confront you at your table, will ever sit opposite to you at your hearth ! Think of the innocent heads of your little children on her bosom : think of their pure lips lisping their infant prayers at her knee. For their sakes, who are not, and who—if she is as you describe her—I pray God may never be—for their sakes, I beg you, I warn you—to pause !'

Jayne paused, and a mist came before his eyes, and there arose up before him out of the past a face that had been the beacon of his youth. He saw it then, through the mist, as he used to see it once in the choir of a village church, and he heard again the sweet voice singing among the children—it was singing elsewhere now ; and through heaven's gate—or the halo that Herbert's lamp made,

blurred by his foolish tears—he caught a passing glimpse of the angel within it.

Herbert looked up at Geraint, who was still standing before the fire with that baggared look of settled determination and defiance on his face. It softened visibly as he encountered Herbert's appealing glance. He shook his head sadly, and walked slowly over to the door.

'It is very kind of you two fellows to take so much interest in me,' he said, stopping at the door, and looking back at them with his white lips working strangely. 'Don't think I'm ungrateful or indifferent; but, God help me! I have made up my mind, whatever the end may be, and—I have got to fight it out.'

He went out and closed the door after him, and they heard his steps echoing drearily down the staircase.

When he had fairly gone, Herbert could stand it no longer, but poured out the whole story of Geraint's infatuation to Jayne, with all its attendant side-lights of mystery and suspicion. He didn't tell him anything about his own part in that awkward transaction, nor did he refer to that dark night's work, nor to Hebe Bellenden's share in it.

'I don't see what we can do for him,' said Herbert; 'he is wilfully bent on his own destruction.'

'You know these—er—ladies?' said Jayne.

'Oh yes; I know them quite well.'

'You don't think that—that any appeal to the girl herself would have any effect?'

'Very odd; but I have been thinking of it.'

'If it is to be done, it should be done at once. That poor dear fellow is in such an excited state that he is likely to do something rash. He is quite capable of marrying this Miss Bellenden off-hand.'

'I'm afraid that's just what he is going to do. I shall certainly not put my hand out straight to help him; but I'm not sure that it is not my duty to hold him back.'

'I am quite sure it is your duty,' Jayne said earnestly. 'If any representation that you could make to the girl would have any effect—she may have some conscience left, some pity—I am sure, it is your duty to make it.'

Geraint had gone down to his room with a conviction that all the world was against him, and that he must steer his own course in this affair without the assistance of his friends.

When Herbert looked in his rooms later on he was smoking a contemplative pipe, with his legs hanging over the back of a chair, and all the clouds cleared away from his handsome frank face.

'It's all settled,' he said, taking the pipe out of his mouth and laying his strong right hand on Herbert's; 'it's all settled! Congratulate me, Flowers—I am to be married on Friday!'

'On Friday?' Herbert repeated, with a strange sinking at his

heart. He could not congratulate him, but he grasped his hand and pressed it silently.

'Yes,' he said gaily; 'we've outwitted them. I've sent Hebe a golden key that'll open all the doors in La Maison Bellenden. She has only to bribe the servant and slip quietly out when the time comes, and take a ticket for Ely, where I shall join her as soon as the races are over; and then—and then we shall be married the following day. It is all settled.'

'I—I thought you could not communicate with her?' Herbert stammered. He did not know what else to say.

Geraint laughed.

'Look,' he said, pointing gaily to two notes that lay open before him on the table; 'I have received these since you and Jayne refused me your valuable assistance. Communication, as the telegraph people have it, has been restored.'

He was so elated with his success, and the prospect of his approaching happiness, that this was clearly no time for reasoning with him.

Herbert left him, and went to bed with a heavy headache. He tossed and tumbled on it during the greater part of the night, falling into a broken sleep full of dreams, and haunted by the accusing face of the man he had carried up that narrow, twisting staircase at St. John's. And when he awoke in the morning Jayne's words were ringing in his ears, 'If any representation that you could make to the girl would have any effect, I am sure it is your duty to make it.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MISES BELLENDEN.

'Who shall sing of the strife, with a thrill of fervid breath?
There is no such poet in life; there is, probably, none in death.'

It was what the boating men with singular unanimity, if not elegance, described as 'a beastly day.' It was the first day of the Lent Races. Dispirited and anxious, after a miserable restless night, Herbert looked out of his window into the gloomy court beneath. A stormy, wet west wind was driving through it, and the white surplises of the men flying across to chapel were blown wildly about like sails of windmills.

He did not go to chapel, but sat by the fire, which burned reluctantly, and thought over the thankless task which he had set before him.

The result of his midnight tremblings and tossings was a determination to make one last effort to save Geraint from the commission of that irrevocable act of folly. If any representation that he could make would have any effect with Hebe Bellenden,

he would not have it upon his conscience that he had failed to make it.

But what representation could he make?

He asked himself the question all through his lectures on that dreary February morning. The sound of the Professor's voice was an unusually long way off, and in the place of his rubicund countenance a ghastly face, only too familiar to Herbert in his dreams, confronted him beneath the Professor's cap.

Was this the answer to his question? He revolved it in his mind as he ran beside his college boat on the bank in the afternoon, on this gloomy first day of the races. Amid all the shouting and hallooing on the bank that question would come uppermost.

The wind had gone down and the rain had ceased, but the ground was sodden and wet—mud, mud, mud, over ankle and boot—a perfect Slough of Despond.

There was the usual frantic howling and raving, and twirling of rattles, on the towpath, and everybody got in everybody's way, and Herbert ran and shouted with the men of Trinity until he had no more breath left. Brown ran too, and blew a horn that Geraint had put into his hands. He wasn't a boating man, and he generally blew it at the wrong moment, and when the critical time came he worked himself up into such a breathless state that he looked likely to go off into apoplexy, or explode in some way, any minute. When Herbert remonstrated with him he explained his new-born enthusiasm in a brief sentence, jerked out at painful intervals.

'He—asked—me—blow it—wouldn't—stop—blowing—for—world!'

The Second Trinity did uncommonly well. There were four boats in front, and a nasty bumping boat close behind. However, a close shave round Grassy gave the Second Trinity an advantage, as the boat in front, which was near enough to invite a bump, had gone round the outside bank. But the boat behind didn't take a bad Grassy either, and there was tremendous excitement on the bank as the men jostled one another, and shouted at the top of their voices to encourage the champions of their respective colleges.

'Pick it up now—you're gaining!'

'Bravo, Trinity!'

'Oh, well rowed, Pembroke!'

'You're gaining! you're gaining!'

And a deafening shout goes up from the men of Pembroke as they struggle and pant along the bank and get mixed up with the dark blues of Trinity.

'Well rowed! Put it on! put it on!'

Brown blew his horn till he was black in the face, and Herbert shouted 'Look out!' at the very top of his lungs, and the Trinity men made a sudden spurt, and the cox pulled his right string hard

during a stroke, and sent up a tremendous wash, about the size of an Atlantic wave, which threw the advancing boat back ; then straightening his rudder, he yelled out :

‘Quicken up!’

The crowd were all mingled on the bank now, and there was a moment of wild excitement, and the Trinity men were shouting, ‘Keep it up! keep it up!’ when there came another cheery shout from the cox :

‘Easy! mind your oars.’

Another moment the Second Trinity was in under the bank, and Pembroke, rowed in splendid style, was racing past it.

The Second Trinity had made a bump.

‘Oh, well coxed ; well coxed, Trinity!’

Herbert helped the men to land. They were only flesh and blood, though, through long training, their muscles were like steel ; but their hearts were not so perfectly disciplined, and they could not go on pumping at that rate for long, and one of the men fainted. Nevertheless, it was a very neat finish.

Herbert followed the flag home. He hadn’t the heart to give his arm to Geraint with the purpose that he had in his mind. He walked behind with the crowd, sending up a feeble shout now and then, just to show his patriotism ; while that silly old man Brown was lugging Geraint along, and shouting and blowing that ridiculous horn of his as if *his* boat, that he had been so long dreaming about, had been rowed up the Cam and won the race by a length.

Herbert didn’t go to the orgy which was held in Geraint’s room later on ; but when Hall was over he put on his thin great-coat under his gown and pressed his cap down over his eyes, and set out to walk through the rain to Chesterton.

The rain had set in again with renewed violence ; the lamps in the streets and on Magdalene Bridge were shuddering with the fierce gusts of wind and rain that drove up from the open fen country.

It was very melancholy in the dark streets of Chesterton, and the wind rushing up the river seemed to have an eerie, threatening sound. More than once, Herbert, shivering and drenched to the skin, asked himself what business he had there. More than once he hesitated and turned to go back, but Jayne’s words rang in his ears : ‘If any representation you could make would have any effect, I am sure it is your duty to make it.’ He had come so far against his inclination, and he went on still against it.

The entry to the Myrtles was darker than ever, and the house had the appearance of being shut up. There was no light in any of the front windows. Herbert knew the way well ; he had been there on a darker night, and he groped his way up to the entry and rang the bell. The bell had a familiar sound to him as he stood shivering on the doorstep. It seemed to say in its confidential whispering voice : ‘Here is a young lambkin coming to be shorn.’

A servant whom Herbert had never seen before opened the door. He inquired for Miss Hebe Bellenden, and was shown into the drawing-room.

It looked very wretched and bare in the feeble light of one candle. There were no fairy lights now, no rose-coloured lamps, no subtle perfume pervading the darkened chamber, only the faint smell of dead grasses and flowers, and that wretched candle spluttering in the socket.

It was so long before anyone came that he thought it would go out, and the corners where the feeble light refused to penetrate were full of shadows. He didn't mind shadows generally, but shadows here meant quite a different thing. He remembered one in that other room that was heavy as lead when he put his reluctant hand to it.

While he was yet thinking of the miserable man who had stumbled across the room, where he now stood, on his last earthly journey, the door opened and Miss Bellenden entered.

He bowed gravely to her, and said with as firm a voice as he could command—her magnificent presence always took away his courage—that he desired the honour of an interview with her sister, Miss Hebe Bellenden.

The lady's white brow clouded over, and she looked at Herbert suspiciously beneath her level brows.

'My sister is not well enough to receive visitors,' she explained coldly.

'She will see me,' said Herbert quietly, 'if you will be so kind as to tell her that my business has reference to that night when—when she honoured me with her confidence.'

Miss Bellenden's face had grown suddenly white—gray, rather—and her black brows were drawn tightly together.

'Whatever you have to say to my sister with reference to that unfortunate night can be said as well to me,' she said coldly; but Herbert thought her firm voice trembled.

'My errand,' Herbert said, with a quiet determination in his voice and manner that he never knew he possessed before, 'is to Miss Hebe Bellenden. If she declines to see me, I must intrust my message to another party.'

He had not intended any threat, and he was not prepared for the sudden anger that blazed up in the lady's eyes.

'There is no necessity for the interference of a third party, Mr. Flowers,' she said haughtily. 'The subject you refer to is quite done with. It was a mere accident; the man would have died anywhere—in the street, maybe. We are simply under the obligation to you of removing the—the body. It saved the unpleasantness of our names appearing in the inquiry. The subject can have no possible interest to my sister.'

Her dark eyes and her white face seemed to glitter with suppressed fear or anger, like baleful lightning, as she stood

speaking to Herbert in the uncertain light of the candle flickering low in the socket.

'Do I understand you,' he said quietly, turning his drenched cap in his hand, as if he were on the point of going—'do I understand you that you decline to allow me an interview with your sister?'

'I decline to have my sister mixed up with the transactions of that unfortunate night to which you have been so considerate as to refer.'

'Then I must seek the intervention of a third party,' said Herbert, bowing gravely, and walking over to the door.

'Stop!' said the woman, before he got to the door. The candle had burnt so low that he could not see her face, but her voice was low with suppressed passion. 'I will see if Hebe can see you. I am sorry that I am mistaken in you, Mr. Flowers. I thought you were a gentleman!' And with this Parthian thrust she swept out of the room.

It was several minutes—hours it seemed to Herbert—before the door again opened, and Hebe Bellenden came in; and all the while the candle had been flickering in the socket, throwing threatening shadows on wall and ceiling.

She came straight up to him, with an eager, impulsive movement. He heard the rustle of her dress on the floor, and he felt the faint sweet odour of that subtle perfume that she brought with her, before, by that uncertain light, he could see her face.

She was paler than usual, for there was no rouge on her cheeks and no false shadows beneath her eyes; but her face was more natural and girlish than he had ever seen it before.

'Have you come from Geraint?'

She asked the question, and answered it with her eyes. He saw her face fall and whiten as her beautiful speaking eyes looked eagerly up into his with that tender question, and droop beneath the answer they read there. Evidently Miss Bellenden had not informed her of the nature of Herbert's errand.

'To what am I indebted for the honour of this visit, Mr. Flowers?' she said, nervously twisting her fair hands together, and not offering one to Herbert.

'I—I am come to ask you to release me from a promise—an oath that I made under very exceptional circumstances,' Herbert said, speaking in a low voice, for he had an impression that he heard the latch of the door click after Hebe Bellenden had closed it.

He could not see her face, as the shadows were deepening in the room, but he hardly recognised her voice when she spoke.

'You—you want to tell *him*?' she said, or rather gasped.

'I want to be released from my promise,' Herbert continued, not noticing the interruption. 'Your sister has been so good as to enter into some explanations; and I gather from her that it is no longer of any moment to you that your part in the—the unhappy transaction should be kept secret; and I therefore beg you to release me.'

He was prepared for a good deal in that house, but he was not prepared for Hebe Bellenden throwing herself on a couch and beginning to sob hysterically.

'My part! my part! O God! my part!' she sobbed. 'Do you know what my part was, Mr. Flowers? Do you know what you ask?'

'I know why I ask it,' Herbert said sadly, moved with a strange pity by her distress. 'Geraint is my dearest friend—and—he will shortly be your husband. If you do not tell him what happened on that night, I must.'

'I tell him? Are you mad? Do you know how honourable, how blameless he is? Do you know that he would loathe me—he would shrink from my touch—he would never look upon my face again? And you ask me to tell him!'

'It is better—it is far better that he should learn it from your lips,' said Herbert huskily. He was more moved by her distress than he could tell. 'He must learn it before—before the knowledge will be of no avail;—and it is better that he should learn it from you than from me.'

'From you? Then you would betray me?'

'I have come to ask you to release me from the promise you exacted from me on that night.'

'Oath!' she said hastily, interrupting him.

'Oath,' he repeated calmly; 'I am not more bound by that than by my verbal promise. Will you release me?'

'I will never release you!' she said passionately.

'Then I warn you, that unless you spare me that most miserable duty, unless, before you take his honourable name, you tell him everything that occurred on that memorable night, I shall feel it my duty, in spite of the hasty oath—the promise given in ignorance—to tell him all.'

'I will make it impossible for you to tell him. I will lay it upon your honour!' she answered passionately.

He could not see her face, for the light was flickering in the socket, and weird, fantastic shadows were gathering around.

'I must ask you to spare me,' he said hurriedly. He wanted no more confessions. 'Oh, if you knew how intolerable this secret is to me!'

'I will make it more intolerable!' she exclaimed. 'I will make it impossible for you to tell him. Do you know what my share in that night's work was?'

'No!' he answered, almost fiercely; 'and I do not want to know!'

'But you shall know; you shall know it upon your honour, and carry the secret with you to your grave. *I murdered that man!*'

Herbert could not have spoken a word to save his life. He stood with his hand on a chair-back, and crushing that limp rag of a cap in his hand, and as the light leaped up a shadow more fearful than the rest seemed closing in around him.

'Do you want to know why I murdered him?' Hebe Bellenden continued in the same hard, strained voice.

She had risen from the couch, and was standing beside Herbert, and had laid her hand upon his arm. He shrank from her touch with unutterable repugnance, and drew his arm away.

'I killed him because *he found me out!* He had caught me cheating him at cards. I had won his money, and he followed me out of the room with a relentless purpose in his eyes. He had no pity. He had no scruples. He was ready for any scene. He would have made an exposure before all those. And I—his miserable faint heart failed him when he was threatening me—and he sank into a chair—and—and I gave him some chloroform. I did not intend to kill him, only to silence him for a time, till the other men should go. But he was dead, quite dead, when the rest came in—and—and you carried him back to his college.'

'And Grinley?' said Herbert hoarsely.

'Oh, Grinley had no more to do with it than you had; but the power that this horrible secret gives him he holds over my head, and I am his slave, his tool. But for Geraint, I should be his wife.'

All the passion had gone out of her voice, and it was tremulous and tender as she softly whispered Geraint's name.

The sound of his name on her lips gave Herbert courage to speak.

'Oh, why did you tell me all this?' he asked.

'Why? Because I trust in your honour. If I tell you the whole truth, and throw myself on your honour—your stainless, chivalrous honour, as a man, as a gentleman—you may despise me, but you will not betray me!'

'Have you no mercy?' said Herbert bitterly.

The flickering light had ceased to flicker, and was settling down in its socket, and the weird shadows had resolved themselves into a settled gloom.

'You tell me this cruel secret, and you seal my lips. Have you no mercy on me? have you no mercy on him? Do you know what he is sacrificing for you?'

'No,' she said eagerly. 'He is too generous to tell me. You may trust me. I will never betray your confidence. It is but right that I should know.'

Herbert paused; he could not see her in the gloom, but the subtle perfume of her presence was near him, was stifling him, was intolerably abhorrent to him, and he shrank away from her with a repugnance that the gloom only partly concealed.

Should he speak?

'If any representation that you could make would be of any avail, I am sure it is your duty to make it.'

Jayne's voice and Jayne's words were ringing in his ears.

'If I tell you,' he said, speaking slowly and thickly, and with a desperate earnestness, 'that he is giving up his friends, his family, his prospects—his splendid prospects—a great position, a useful,

honourable career, wealth, power, fame, and, above all, the love of the best and noblest woman in the world——'

'Ah!' she said, interrupting him with bated breath; 'do you say, truly, that he is giving up all this for me? On your honour?'

'On my honour!'

'Oh, my darling, my darling! How can I repay you?'

She was talking to herself. She had altogether forgotten Herbert's presence.

'How?' he exclaimed eagerly, interrupting her. 'How? Oh, Miss Bellenden! I know you can be noble, be generous; have pity upon him! Show your love to him by——'

'By giving him up?' she interrupted fiercely. 'I might have done so if—if you had not told me all—if you had not told me of the woman whose love he had rejected. No; I will not give him up to her!'

'Oh, cruel, cruel love; crueller than hate!' Herbert had in his mind to say, but he didn't say it. He only said feebly, hopelessly: 'But you will never marry him without telling him what you have told me, Miss Bellenden?'

'I will never tell him what I have told you; and you, if I know you aright, will never tell him. And I will certainly marry him!'

A low, stifled cry escaped Herbert. He involuntarily measured all women by a standard that he had set up in his own mind. It was a very low standard measured by linear inches. The little mother was no height to speak of, but Hebe Bellenden fell immeasurably short of it.

There was no purpose to be gained in prolonging the interview. He had made the only representation that he could make, and it had failed. Clearly there was nothing further to do.

'I am very sorry,' he said, speaking huskily, for he was deeply moved; 'I am sorry for him, and I am sorry for you. God grant that you may never have cause to regret this cruel, woful act!'

The dying flame shot suddenly up in the socket, and in that momentary light he saw Hebe Bellenden's ghastly face, and a weird awful shadow closing around her as the light went slowly out. The room was in perfect darkness, and he groped his way over to the door. She did not speak, or seek to detain him, and when he went out into the gloomy night, the wind and the rain only intensified the thick black darkness that he had left behind.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE LENT RACES.

'Drink to (Second) Trinity's conquering boat—
The best piece of timber that e'er was afloat!
Drink to the men who, so trusty and strong,
'Midst danger and treachery, pulled her along,
As Englishmen should, to the head of the river!
Drink to our boat, and three hearty cheers give her !'

THE Second Trinity had done splendidly every day of the Lent Races. Its success was almost unparalleled. It had gone up a place every night, and one night it had made a quite unexpected bump.

The performance had been altogether phenomenal; the success of the college boat had caused a feeling of intense satisfaction throughout Trinity, and the thanks of the college had been gratefully and enthusiastically awarded to the crew and the coach, and especially to the cox for his skilful and plucky steering.

It was the eve of the last race, and the Second Trinity had repeated and eclipsed the performance of the previous nights, and was second on the river. The excitement, or the exertion of the last bump, was too much for one of the crew, and for the second time during the races he had fainted on coming to the bank. This time the collapse was more serious, and it was some time before he could be brought round, and he had to be driven back to his college while his colleagues followed the flagback in triumph.

Brown, who had panted gallantly on foot beside the boat every night of the races, and awoke the echoes with fiendish yells whenever he had breath enough to spare, had roared and yelled himself by this time quite hoarse and voiceless. He had already sacrificed, independent of his lungs, on the altar of friendship, two rattles. The horn had proved useless after the first night, as he had no breath left to blow it, and there remained nothing but a dinner-bell wherewith to display his unabated patriotism.

He walked back with Herbert and Geraint behind the flag across Midsummer Common. The hero was between them, unusually silent and calm, in the midst of all that noisy demonstration. The heroes of the day, with the little cox on their shoulders, were escorted back to their college amid the enthusiastic shouts of their friends and the congratulations and applause of their many admirers, who accorded them every now and again a frantic cheer.

Everybody had stopped work for the day, and the banks of the Cam and the meadows were crowded with people. The bright colours of the college blazers, the scarlet of Lady Margaret (as the boat-club of St. John's delights to call itself), the light blue of

Pembroke, the dark blue of Trinity, the red and black of Jesus, the wasp-like hues of Clare, and the endless variety of stripes, gave a lively colour to the moving masses, and conveyed a cheerful impression to the usually sombre landscape. There was a rosy flush in the sky, which was serene and beautiful. The clouds which had veiled it for so many days had parted and cleared away, and only the distant mountain-tops of storms that had spent themselves lay at peace on the tranquil breadth of the horizon.

The river reflected back the living picture : the flushed rosy sky, the animated processions of the brilliant parti-coloured crews, the holiday crowd, the green fields, the clumps of trees in the distance, the rooks overhead cawing their harsh chorus to the song that a thousand lusty young voices were shouting beneath : 'For he's a jolly good fellow !'

Brown couldn't sing, for he was as hoarse as a raven ; but he broke out every now and then into a frantic 'Hooray !'

Herbert was silent ; he had no heart for singing ; he was thinking of what the morrow would bring.

Geraint understood his silence, but he made no reference to it. As they came nearer the town the steeples of the many churches seemed to emerge from the mist, where they had been hidden so many days, and came out to meet them ; the children came out of cottage doors to see them pass, and little fluttering girl-graduates scurried timidly away out of their path, and watched them with their bright eyes from a distance.

Before they left the common the crowd struck up 'Auld Lang Syne,' and the men joined hands in the hearty chorus as they streamed in ragged, uneven lines across the grass.

Geraint grasped a hand of each of his friends, and a mist came before his eyes, as the familiar words rose lustily on every lip. Should he ever grasp these hands again in love and friendship ? To-morrow he would be a wanderer—wilfully exiled from these associations of his youth. With these reflections in his mind the friendly grip of his hand may have been unconsciously warmer, and the men returned it with equal warmth, and the eyes of that silly old man, Brown, were full of tears. There was a suspicious catch in Herbert's voice as he bellowed out in his fine bass the old words that he used to sing on speech-days at school :

'For Auld Lang Syne,
We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
For Auld Lang Syne !'

There was a bump supper and an enthusiastic meeting in Geraint's rooms, finishing up with a torchlight procession round the Great Court. Even Jayne lumped round with them, though he didn't join the orgy.

It was a very quiet night. The moon was large and bright as it rose above the battlements of Trinity, and the stars had come out in

their millions. The night was so quiet that the echoes still lingered in the old cloisters long after the footsteps had ceased.

'Hark! What is that?' Geraint asked as they paused under the arch of Neville's Court.

They had staved behind the rest of the crowd to enjoy the beauty of the night—their last night.

'What?' said Herbert; 'I heard nothing except the fellows shouting.'

'That knocking, like nails driven into a coffin. There it is again!'

A sharp repeated knock broke the silence of the court from the apparently deserted cloister.

'Oh, it is only someone doing the knocker trick.'

'I don't think so. I have done it myself a hundred times, but never in that way.'

They passed into Neville's Court, and walked round it in that moonlight.

'I've got my *creat*,' said Geraint presently, breaking the silence; 'it's all arranged. I shall go away from here directly after the race. I am so glad and proud that we have done so well. I shall be proud of it all my life. Whether I shall ever come back, God knows!'

'It will depend upon your father's forgiveness,' Herbert was going to say, but he paused and substituted 'acceptance of the situation.'

'Exactly,' Geraint said meditatively. 'I am sorry to have disappointed him. He was the best and kindest father in the world. There has always been such confidence between us until now. He trusted me so completely; the blow will be only the greater.'

He stopped suddenly, and his lip trembled for a moment. Herbert, remembering that awful confession of Hebe Bellenden's, made a last appeal.

'Oh, Geraint,' he said brokenly, 'the time has not gone by; it is not too late!'

A smile crossed his frank face as he turned his eyes on Herbert, in the moonlight, with a trustful look as if he knew that he would not misunderstand him.

'My dear fellow,' he said, 'I thank God it is too late!'

There was nothing more to be said, and Herbert walked by his side until they reached his staircase. They parted at the foot with a brief 'Good-night,' and Geraint went into his room and closed his oak with a bang.

Herbert didn't go straight to his own rooms, though the hour was so late, and all the lights on the staircase were out. He stumbled up the steep stairs as best he could, and found his way into Jayne's room. He had not gone to bed, and Brown was there.

There was a gloomy look on Herbert's face when he entered which they both remarked. Jayne made room for him at the fire.

He had already heard of the failure of Herbert's mission, but he had not learned the dreadful secret that Hebe Bellenden had charged him with.

'You are in trouble about Geraint?' he inquired anxiously.

Herbert nodded.

'Can nothing be done for him?' he asked presently, looking straight into Herbert's face with the light of a smile on his dark plain features.

'Nothing!' said Herbert moodily.

'Nothing? Couldn't we pray for him?'

Herbert hadn't thought of that, except in a private way, when his oak was sported, and that inner door closed, and he was shivering on that little worn bit of carpet before he got into bed.

'You are always right, Jayne,' he said awkwardly, 'but I'm afraid it is too late.'

'Dear me!' Jayne answered with a look of concern; 'and is the arm of the Lord shortened?'

'No; I didn't mean that. I meant that to-morrow it will be all over.'

'All the more reason why we should ask His intercession to-night. You know that passage in the glorious Catholic Epistle of St. James, "Pray for one another, that ye may be healed." Let us pray for our poor brother who is sick and distraught in mind, that the Lord's hand may be stretched out to save him, even as by fire.'

Suiting the action to the word, Jayne went down on his knees, and the two men turned their faces to the backs of their chairs, and knelt down beside them.

He poured out his simple soul before the great Arbitrator of the destinies of men, and begged, if it were possible, that this temptation that had overcome their poor misguided friend should be removed from him, or that with the temptation there should be a way of escape made plain to him.

The men all arose from their knees saddened and subdued, and parted silently.

When Herbert got down to his room the fire was out, and his lamp was burning low. He had not been in his room a minute before he heard a footstep in the passage without, and Geraint opened the door.

'Oh,' he said—he was looking strangely moved, and his voice was not so steady as usual; 'I have been up here before, and you were out. Did you happen to see a white bird, a stray pigeon or a dove, I expect, fluttering about the staircase?'

'No,' said Herbert; 'I have just come down from Jayne's rooms; I should have seen it if it had been there.'

'Oh, it was there just now; it came up the staircase before me. I heard the flapping of its wings. If I were superstitious, now, I should say it was a warning. There is a legend in our family, in

the absence of a respectable family ghost, of a white dove appearing on the eve of any tragical event. But I am quite sure this thing was real ; I have opened the door below to let it fly out.'

'I am sure the event of to-morrow will be tragical enough,' said Herbert gloomily.

Geraint looked at him with the light of a smile on his lip, but his face was quite serious, almost grave.

'Do you know,' he said, looking steadfastly at Herbert, 'that we tried the divination trick with Virgil to-night, to find out what would be the fortune of the boat to-morrow, and we came upon a strange passage ? "*Nunc augur Apollo, nunc Lycie sortes, nunc et Jove missus ab ipso interpretes divom fert horrida iussa per auras.*" How do you read it ?'

'I shouldn't attempt to read it at all,' said Herbert ; 'I don't like that kind of tampering with forbidden mysteries ; it's like tempting Providence. I should go to bed, if I were you, or you'll never get the boat up another place to-morrow.'

'All right,' said Geraint, still with that smile on his lip, and his face grave and earnest. 'I want you to take charge of this till to-morrow night ; and—and—if anything happens to me, I want you to promise to burn it unopened.'

He laid a small packet neatly tied up and sealed on the table as he spoke.

'My dear fellow,' Herbert exclaimed, 'what can happen ? You're nervous and overwrought to-night—I don't wonder at it ! You'll be all right in the morning.'

Geraint's lips still smiled.

'You'll promise me ?' he said quietly, putting the packet in Herbert's hand, 'and you'll lock it up—until——'

'Until you ask for it again,' interrupted Herbert cheerfully. 'All right, old fellow ; I'll promise you.'

Herbert didn't go to chapel the next morning ; in fact, very few men of Trinity did go to chapel, and the Dean, and the Scholar who read the lessons, had the service pretty much to themselves.

The crew of the Second Trinity breakfasted together in the rooms of the cox, and Herbert met Spurway in the court as the men were coming out.

'I say,' he called out to Herbert across the grass, 'do you want to row to-day ? Five's knocked up, and cox is going to ask you to take his place.'

'I'm very sorry,' said Herbert ; 'I don't think Johnson could stand another day ; but I haven't been practising lately. Isn't there another fellow they could ask ?'

'Oh yes ; they could ask me. I trained for it, you know ; but your weight's better. It's a mere question of weight. If you refuse they will ask me.'

Herbert smiled grimly. He remembered Spurway's perform-

ance at the previous Lent Races, and how the boat went down with persistent ill-fortune a place every night.

'All right,' he said, ignoring the other's obliging suggestion; 'but they haven't asked me yet. If they do I shall most certainly accept.'

And Spurway confounded the beggar's impudence the whole length of the Great Court.

Herbert's heart was bumping beneath his purple gown with excitement. Would they really ask him?

The question was set at rest by the cox himself, who met him at the foot of his staircase.

'Hullo!' said the cox; 'I was just coming to ask you to pull in the race to-night. Johnson's quite knocked up. I think you're about his weight.'

'Not quite,' said Herbert modestly. 'Geraint is; I'm afraid I'm hardly heavy enough.'

'Oh, then you can change places.'

Then Herbert, blushing like a girl, pleaded that he hadn't trained, and that he was sure there were much better men they could pick out; but all his objections were overruled, and to his great and hardly concealed delight the whole thing was settled.

Herbert never spent such a proud day, and never, surely, such a long day in his life. He was too excited to go to lectures, and he couldn't read, and he wandered about in a feverish, excited state until it was time to go down to the boats.

Geraint, perhaps, was the coolest of all the crew of the Second Trinity. He rose early, while Herbert was still in bed, and went to chapel—his last college chapel. Jayne met him there, and they walked back to their rooms together.

After the breakfast he had some things to do in his room, laying out the things for his gyp to pack; and when Herbert joined him, after the early dinner of the crew, he pointed with pride to the portmanteaus lying ready strapped on the floor.

'There,' he said cheerfully. 'Now I think everything is ready.'

All the gloomy forebodings of the previous night had passed away, and he was in the highest spirits. He paused and looked round his old college room when he got to the door, with a half-regretful smile, as if he were taking leave of it.

'You will come back here?' said Herbert in a tone of concern.

'Oh yes; I shall come back here to change. I shall slip out quietly without saying any good-byes—you must say them all for me, Flowers—and tell that old man, Brown, not to bother about that wretched money. The satisfaction it gave me to duck that fellow Grinley was worth double the amount. And now I am going to pay him off a little score of my own. I am going to carry Hobe off from under his very eyes. By this time to-morrow she will be my wife!'

He smiled his old tender smile as he softly repeated the last

word with something of the chivalrous ardour of a knight of old. But Herbert sighed and hung his head, and Jayne's question rang in his ears, 'Is the arm of the Lord shortened?'

'To-morrow?' he repeated.

'Yes, I have got the license already, so there will be no delay. She will wait for me at Ely. She has started now'—again that tender, shining smile lit up his face—'and we shall go up by the night express—this will put them off the scent—and be married in Loudon at eight o'clock to-morrow, and start at once for Paris.'

There was no more time for talking, for the bank was crowded with men, and they were none too early. The punts and ferries were plying rapidly backwards and forwards carrying the men across to the other side, and the meadows were crowded with spectators. There was great excitement, for it was rumoured that there had been a change in the crew of the Second Trinity, and that she wouldn't hold her own this last night of the races. All the excitement and enthusiasm seemed to centre round the two first boats. The crew of Lady Margaret glared at the crew of Second Trinity, not exactly with scorn or fiendish animosity on their frank young faces, but with a superior 'don't-think-much-of-your-boat' expression that was very trying, to say the least of it, to the crew of the Second Trinity.

While the crews were removing all unnecessary clothing, Jayne limped up to the bank; he had just crossed over by the ferry.

Geraint nodded to him heartily, and Herbert, looking up and seeing the mild astonishment on his kind face—he hadn't had a chance of telling him of the change in the crews—blushed furiously.

'God bless you!' said Jayne, waving his hand.

They couldn't hear him, but his simple benediction didn't do them any harm.

'Is the arm of the Lord shortened?' Herbert seemed to hear in the shout that arose on the bank as the boat started.

They rowed down with long sweeping strokes, easing as they passed Ditton Corner, and pausing a little to be admired as they passed the Rectory Meadow, which was crowded with ladies. They didn't see Brown until they reached the starting-point. He had gone down quietly before them, and was already there, so as to be able to run with the boat. He came down the bank and stood above his boots in the water, and went through a great amount of dumb-show expressive of his tremendous patriotism, and displayed an enormous dinner-bell or railway-bell, that he had provided for emergencies.

The race had created tremendous excitement throughout the Varsity. It was not the fate of the Second Trinity that men were interested in; it was the struggle for the first place on the river.

There came by-and-by a moment of breathless excitement, when

everybody was craning his neck, and the men were waiting, stretching forward ready for the signal to start. It was quite a solemn moment to the spectators on the bank, but what was it to Herbert? His heart wasn't exactly in his mouth, but it was thumping away at his side, and he was trembling all over. He thought in that supreme moment of the little mother, and in the hush that had fallen over all the noisy crowd in that breathless moment, he seemed to hear Jayne's voice saying, 'Is the arm of the Lord shortened?'

Bang!

Before the sound reached them, with the flash of the starting gun, the cox had dropped the chain, and there was a crash on the water of the oars striking it at the same moment, and the boat, like a living thing, leaped forward.

In a moment, from breathless silence, there was a scene of mad excitement. A tremendous cheer went up; then ensued a general rushing and shouting, a springing of rattles, a ringing of bells. The crowds on the bank scatter, the men running in wild, surging groups on the towing-path beside their boats, yelling frantically the while, as if just let loose from Hanwell.

The coach of the Second Trinity rode in advance of the throng to clear the way, while the men panted gallantly on foot, waking the echoes with fiendish yells.

'Well pulled all!'

'Bravo, Trinity!'

Lady Margaret started beautifully, thirty-seven strokes a minute to Second Trinity's thirty-five, while the boat behind, Emmanuel, that had gone down the previous night, was slowly gaining on them, and evidently meant to regain the place she had lost.

Herbert wasn't a bit nervous now. His heart had ceased bumping, except from the exertion; but amid all the hurly-burly on the bank, the thousand faces turned upon the boat, the thousand voices raised in deafening shouts, he saw but one face smiling upon him—the face of the little mother. He heard but one voice—the voice of Jayne:

'Is the arm of the Lord shortened?'

And Geraint? Perhaps the hurly-burly best suited his mood. Every faculty was brought into play. His stroke was glorious; the muscles of his magnificent limbs seemed steel. What a splendid giant he was!—his frank, handsome face flushed with the exertion—a very monarch of youth, and health, and manly beauty in the heyday of his strength!

Emmanuel was certainly gaining. Jack Harvard rowed five, and the strength of his stroke showed that the American climate has not an injurious effect on a man's muscles. The Emmanuel stroke pulled magnificently, and at Grassy it was allowed that Emmanuel had gained a length.

'Pick her up, Emmanuel! Well rowed!—put it on!' came a

shout from the bank. 'You're gaining every stroke! Bravo, Emmanuel!'

Herbert glanced nervously up at the cox, but the cox had no eyes for anything that was behind him. His well-trained eye had detected what Herbert couldn't see, but what everyone on the bank saw, that if Emmanuel was gaining upon them, they were gaining on Lady Margaret.

'Now then, pick it up!'

Stroke had quickened. After they had rounded Ditton, Second Trinity began to creep up in earnest, and the enthusiastic shouts of their supporters on the bank spurred them on to fresh exertions. There was a shout from the bank:

'Trinity is spurring! Put it on! put it on! You're gaining!'

So they were, and to some purpose. To the frantic joy of the Trinity men on the bank, they pulled up at every stroke, and the pace was furious. The roar on the bank grew quite delirious, and the cheers were deafening; and above it all was the sound of Brown's dinner-bell—but even that had no other voice for Herbert than the voice of Jayne:

'Is the arm of the Lord shortened?'

A crew cannot possibly go on spurring for ever, but the moment the spurt was over Lady Margaret ruthlessly forged ahead. It was only too obvious that Lady Margaret was holding her own at only an ordinary stroke. And a great and well deserved cheer went up from the scarlet blazers on the bank.

Oh, how Herbert hated them!

Still, they had distanced Emmanuel. But Second Trinity were by no means done with. Time after time Trinity stroke picked his exhausted crew up, and the roar on the bank grew louder and louder.

'Well rowed, Trinity! Well rowed all!'

If Herbert could only have just one look ahead! The face of the cox is dark and anxious, but surely the two crowds on the bank are mingled now, and the cheers come in one deafening roar?

'Bravo, Trinity! Pick it up now—you're gaining!'

Presently the face of the cox changed; it was still very grave.

'Can you quicken?' he asked more with his eyes than his lips. Stroke nodded; he couldn't spare breath to speak. 'Quicken up!' he yelled, and once again, within sight of the Railway Bridge, the Second Trinity spurted.

They were running a desperate race, but they spurted heroically. Their pluck and determination were past all praise; and Lady Margaret, who were a length and a half ahead, were wholly unprepared for it.

'Oh, well rowed, Trinity!'

The frantic shouts from the shore were deafening. It seemed anybody's race now, and the winning-post was in sight. There

was a roar of encouragement from the bank, and Brown's dinner-bell above it all, and—still more distinctly—the voice of Jayne :

'Is the arm of the Lord shortened?'

Lady Margaret, respecting the strength of her enemy too late, quickened too, but Second Trinity were upon her, and Herbert felt a shock that sent a shiver all through him; and the cox was shouting :

'Easy! mind your oars!'

And the bows of Second Trinity glided up by the side of Lady Margaret, and the next moment they were under the bank.

'Oh, well rowed, Trinity!'

The shouting on the bank was delirious. A bump within sight of the winning-post, with all the world looking on! The prize, the head of the river! No wonder Herbert leant over his oar, faint, and with a swimming in his head, and the voices on the bank all merged into one—the voice of Jayne :

'Is the arm of the Lord shortened?'

It was only for a moment, and, faint, bewildered, he was conscious that something had crashed into them—it had passed him.

O God! it had struck Geraint!

A sudden cry. Five leaps spasmodically into the air—and in a moment the crew of Second Trinity are all struggling in the water. They lift Geraint out, and lay him on the bank, senseless and bleeding. The sharp-pointed iron prow of Emmanuel has pierced his heart, and the life-blood is welling from an awful wound in his side!

It all happened in a moment, and while the cheers of a thousand spectators, the shouts of victory, are in his ears, he is lying on the grass with his head on Herbert's lap, and Brown wildly attempting to stanch that awful red tide that is flowing from his side.

The dinner-bell was on the ground beside him—it had rung its last peal. The crews were crowding round with blanched and stricken faces, too shocked and bewildered to grasp the full horror of the situation. Jack Harvard was the first to recover himself.

The fine old American spirit of being prepared for everything, the habitual coolness of a race inured to danger and familiar with emergencies, had not forsaken him for long, and before a cry could be raised for a doctor, Jack Harvard was half-way across Midsummer Common in quest of one. He had sprung upon the horse of the Trinity coach, and was flying on a race against Time and Death—by no means new in the annals of his stormy ancestry. He had not to ride far. A window was thrown up in a street near Jesus College, and the welcome face of a well-known surgeon looked out. The furious pace had told its accustomed tale to his practised ear.

'For God's sake come quickly!' Harvard exclaimed, panting the words out from his laboured chest. 'There is an awful accident

on the bank. The prow of our boat has struck a man in the heart !

He had hailed a hansom on the way, and the surgeon jumped in, and there was a mad race through the streets of Cambridge back to the scene of the accident ; and the borough policeman, whose feelings were much outraged by the utter disregard of his threat to summon them for furious driving, relieved his mind by making a note of the occurrence and, as far as he could make out, the number of the cab.

Alas ! the attitude of the silent group around the hero of the Second Trinity told its own tale. The men all stood around him with uncovered heads. His race was quite run, and he had died a hero's death in the moment of victory.

He lay upon the grass with that awful pool by his side, like some youthful Samson stricken down in the midst of his manly beauty and his strength. His lips, so still in death, were parted with the old tender smile, and the wind was stirring his fair curls as his head still lay pillowed on Herbert's knee.

A stretcher had already been procured, and, by the doctor's orders, for no one else spoke, in the midst of a strangely-hushed silence, they tenderly raised him, and, spreading their gay parti-coloured coats beneath, laid him on it, and the Trinity men covered him reverently with his college blazers.

The crew of Lady Margaret, the crew he had so splendidly beaten, bore him through the deeply-moved crowd, who stood uncovered while they passed, the crews of Second Trinity and Emmanuel silently following behind.

That poor old man, Brown, was left kneeling upon the grass, with a stricken look upon his face, and when he blindly rose to his feet he stumbled over the dinner-bell. The sight of the bauble brought back to his dazed senses the awful calamity, and the bitter irony of its surroundings, and Herbert led him away sobbing like a child.

Who could desire a nobler death than to fall in the midst of the shouts of victory, full in the eyes of knights and dames, struck by some friendly lance ?

His bright, brief reign was over ; the absolute monarchy of youth and health, of beauty and strength, had been his. He had had his day—his brief golden day—and now, with blanched faces and slow, heavy tread, they bore his unconscious body through the Great Court, past a line of awe-stricken undergraduates, to his own rooms.

Brown had sobbed his heart out all along the line of way ; but Herbert was silent and dry-eyed. He had received the dear fellow's last breath, the last beat of that generous heart had been throbbed out on his breast, and the only words that his lips could frame in that supreme moment were : 'The arm of the Lord is not shortened !'

Jayne met him at the head of the stair as he staggered blindly

into his rooms. He put his arms around him, and led him in as if he were a child.

'Oh, what have we done! what have we done!' he moaned, speaking for the first time.

'Hush!' said Jayne gravely. 'His ways are not our ways. Who can say to what a nobler life he is called? We know what he has missed here.'

'Oh, Jayne, I will never again seek to interfere in the ways of Providence! But for our misguided prayers he might have been living still!'

'My poor fellow,' said Jayne softly, and his dark eyes were shining with an inner light, 'spare your reproaches. It was not your poor prayers, or mine, that shortened his life. Depend upon it the counsels of Infinite Wisdom and Beneficence are beyond the reach of our weak human interference.'

'Then what is the use of prayer?' said Herbert bitterly. He was no longer master of himself.

Jayne's poor plain face was shining back the reflection of that Presence with whom he lived so near, as he softly rebuked Herbert's impatience.

'God will have His children ask His aid and direction in all the great issues of life, but He answers in His own way—not ours. He whose mercy compasses man's life knows when the great design is complete, the pattern finished, and then—but not till then—the silver cord is loosed; not till then the golden bowl is broken.'

Brown was listening with his red eyes distended and his lips twitching.

'Oh, thank God!' he exclaimed, 'that his life has been such a bright one! It was the kindest, roundest, completest life, I believe, in the whole 'Varsity—in the whole world! There are dark shadows in all our lives; thank God there were none in his! It was rounded off, complete, and perfect before the threatened shadow fell.'

'Perfect!' Herbert echoed bitterly. His eyes were hard and burning. The first bitterness of his grief could take no comfort—could find no blessed relief in tears. 'Perfect! when he is cut off before his life is begun! Oh, think of the splendid promise of it!'

He buried his face in his hands, but no tears came through his tightly-clenched fingers. Jayne stroked them softly as a mother would stroke the hands of a rebellious child.

'Whatever his life's work was, depend upon it, dear fellow, he had finished it. As Brown says, the pattern was quite complete. When the servant has done the task committed to him, then, but not till then, his Master calls him to other work for which his service here has fitted him. Oh, it is a noble plan! We shall see it some day with clearer eyes; we see it through a glass darkly now—but then face to face! Oh, the glory of it! There will be but

one cloud then to dim the brightness of that perfect vision—the memory of our foolish impatience, our impotent resistance of the guiding of the kind Hand that has arranged out of loose, aimless, discordant threads the wonderful complex pattern of our lives.'

Jayne's face was lighted up with that inner light that made it no longer poor, or plain, or commonplace, and Herbert's rebellious grief was softened, if not subdued before it

'You think his life's work was done?' he said huskily.

'I do not think, my dear fellow; I should dishonour my Master if I only thought—I am quite sure of it!'

'It was not only done,' said Brown solemnly, lifting his cap off as he spoke, 'but it was well done. Thank God for it!'

CHAPTER XXV.

AT ELY STATION.

'The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with Death.'

AN hour later Herbert, wrapped up in his thin great-coat (he risked on this supreme occasion being proctorized), was seated in a third-class carriage on the way to Ely.

In the midst of his grief he had remembered the wretched woman who awaited the dead man in the waiting-room at Ely Station. He shrank from the painful task, but he remembered how Geraint loved this woman, and for his sake he nerved himself to be the bearer of this awful news.

Surely he would break it more tenderly than any other!

Hebe Bellenden was not on the platform when the train stopped. There was a crowd of people on the platform returning from the boat-race, and the accident was on every lip.

Could she have heard already?

Herbert fought his way through the crowd to the deserted waiting-room. No, not quite deserted, for, sitting in a shadow, in the darkest corner, was a veiled female figure. The light had been turned down, and the room was in semi-darkness, and he could not see her distinctly.

She came forward eagerly; there was no mistaking the easy grace of that proud, imperious figure.

'Oh, you have come at last!'

Herbert looked up at her gravely as she approached him with, oh! such a tender light in her eyes, that he had never seen in woman's eyes before.

How should he tell her?

She stopped short when she perceived her mistake, and her countenance fell, and the smile seemed frozen on her lips.

'So, he has sent you?' she said tremulously.

'No,' he said sadly, 'he has not sent me.'

'Then—then he will not come! He has read my letter. Oh, Mr. Flowers, I took your counsel—I have written to him at the last moment and told him all—everything—and he will not come! He has sent you to break it to me?'

'No,' said Herbert again, with a strange pity in his eyes; '*Je* has not sent me. But I have, indeed, come to break it to you. Oh, Miss Bellenden, how shall I tell you?'

'Don't tell me!' she said fiercely, her dark eyes flashing with a sudden fire. 'Don't tell me that he shrinks from me with horror, with loathing—that he has ceased to love me—you—you who urged me to confess! I cannot, I will not, hear my sentence from your cruel lips!'

Still he was looking at her with that new strange pity in his eyes that goaded her to madness.

'He will never shrink from you, and he has never ceased to love you,' he said sadly. 'Thank God on your knees, Hebe Bellenden, that you told him, for he knows it all now. He sees with clearer eyes now.'

Something in his tone struck her, and her face grew suddenly white.

'What do you mean? For God's sake speak plainly! What do you mean?'

She had grasped the back of a chair for support, and was looking at him with a desperate hunger in her eyes, as if she would tear the answer from him. For a moment his courage forsook him. He had never realized until that miserable moment how this cold, proud woman had loved Geraint.

Herbert led her gently to a seat, with a silent sympathy she could not be blind to.

'Do you ever say your prayers?' he said inconsequently, bending over her, in a hoarse whisper.

'You have no right to ask me such a question!' she answered impatiently. 'God help me, I used to!'

'If you have not forgotten the way,' he went on hoarsely, hurriedly, with his hand on her shoulders, as if pressing her down, 'go down on your knees, Hebe Bellenden, and repeat the words after me, "Thy will be done——"'

Before he could finish the sentence she had slid off the bench of the waiting-room on to the floor, and lay there huddled up of a heap.

'O God!' she cried; 'he is dead!'

'Yes,' Herbert said solemnly, but with a feeling of relief that it was over; 'he is dead.'

She did not scream, or faint, or weep; she only sat staring at him

with her dark eyes blazing, and all the colour dying slowly out of her face beneath those two dreadful patches on her cheeks. And then, to Herbert's horror and alarm, she threw herself forward at his feet in a sudden paroxysm of agony, and clutched his knees.

'Unsay it! Oh, unsay it!' she cried. 'Oh, say you're trifling with me, Mr. Flowers—dear, good, kind, generous Mr. Flowers—say you're trifling with me!'

Herbert entreated her to rise, and got his arms about her to help her up; but she only clutched his knees the more frantically, and implored him to tell her that he had deceived her. Herbert turned his face to the wall; he could not look at her. With all her sins, he was so penetrated by the depth of her grief, and her attitude of utter humiliation, that he could not trust himself to look at her.

'It is only too true,' he said sadly. 'He died on my knees, only an hour ago. The prow of a boat pierced him to the heart, and he died suddenly—painlessly, we hope.'

'O my God!'

She did not faint; Herbert thought she had, and raised her unresistingly, as he would have lifted a child, and laid her on the bench, and sprinkled some water from the bottle on the table on her face. She gasped once or twice, but else she lay there like one dead, with her eyes closed, and the water, not her tears, making awful channels down through the rouge on her cheeks.

The time was drawing on, and the last train to Cambridge had been signalled, and still she lay there, and Herbert had not been able to rouse her.

'I must go back to Cambridge to-night, Miss Bellenden,' he said desperately; 'shall I take a ticket for you, or where will you go?'

She opened her eyes and looked at him, blankly, but she laid her hand upon his arm with a gesture he took for assent. He came back to her presently and lifted her off the bench, supporting her to the carriage with his arm.

'Where is your luggage?' he asked her.

'Luggage? I have no luggage. He would not let me bring anything; and then, at the mention of Geraint, she sank back into the cushions of the carriage in a sudden passion of tears.

He had spent his last remaining half-sovereign in taking first-class tickets to Cambridge, and in feeing the railway-porter to secure an empty carriage for the woman that Geraint had loved.

He let her weep the first wild burst of her sorrow out undisturbed. He did not attempt to comfort her. His brain was in a whirl; the events of the past few hours seemed like some dreadful dream from which he should presently awaken. His mind was feebly groping its way through the awful rush of circumstance to that darkened room where—where—— He woke from his dream with a shudder. He could not pursue it any further. And then

all sorts of speculation arose in his mind, and a question presented itself. Hebe Bellenden had spoken of a letter. Had Geraint received it?

He was quite sure in his own mind that he had not. He remembered the last bright, conscious look of that frank face when they had stepped into the boat. He remembered the last words of that cheery voice: 'She will wait for me at Ely; she has started now.' No, Geraint had never received that letter. He had died in happy ignorance of her guilt and unworthiness; his last thoughts of her were perfect love and confidence.

'When did you send that letter?' Herbert asked her as they came in sight of Cambridge Station.

She looked at him with a dazed and puzzled air.

'That letter to Geraint,' he explained.

'I posted it before I started. I posted it at the station,' she answered mechanically.

There was a crowd on the platform when the train drew up, and Herbert helped her to alight, and drew her hurriedly through it and placed her in a cab, and told the driver where to take her.

He stood by the window one moment looking at the crushed and drooping figure that lay back on the cushions, with the cruel lamp-light revealing the paths of her tears on the rouge that still mocked the ghastly whiteness of her face.

'Have you any questions to ask me?' he said; 'have you anything you wish to say?'

The question, quite involuntarily, took the form of a final farewell.

'No,' she said absently as she lay back, looking vacantly before her, and speaking like one in a dream; 'I have no questions to ask; I have nothing to say.'

Herbert walked back to his college, and passed the well-known figure of the Senior Proctor on his way, followed by his attendant bull-dogs. The Proctor passed him unheeding; not so the lynx-eyed satellite in his rear.

'Trinity man, sir,' said the bull-dog blithely, stepping up to the Proctor, and forthwith Herbert was proctorized for the heinous offence of being at large in the streets of Cambridge after dusk without his cap and gown.

When he got back to his rooms he learned that Geraint's father had already arrived. He thanked God afterwards that he had not been there to witness that terrible meeting.

His son's tutor, Mr. Routh, and the Master of Trinity accompanied him into the room where lay all that was mortal of his first-born, his only son; and Brown and Jayne, who watched beside him, broke utterly down when they spoke of the terrible scene of the strong man's grief at that sad meeting. It was too sacred a sight for the eyes of strangers to witness, and they crept out of the room

and waited on the staircase without, and presently the Master, his warm, tender nature completely overcame, came out too, weeping like a child.

Geraint's father was still in the room below when Herbert came in, and Mr. Routh was with him. There could be no further need of concealment now, and Herbert, so far as he could without betraying Hebe Bellenden's confidence, told Geraint's two friends the story of her late confession. She had only made it at the eleventh hour, and he had not received it. The letter containing it would be now in his room, unopened probably.

'It must not fall into his father's hands,' said Herbert, looking from one to the other; 'we must spare the dear fellow's memory at any cost.'

'That,' said Brown very quietly, 'is my legacy. It shall *not* fall into his father's hands.'

There had been two deliveries of letters on the staircase since the accident, and Hebe's letter was probably, even now, lying on his table.

'What if his father should have opened it?'

The suggestion made Herbert's cheek blanch.

'There is no time to lose,' said Brown quietly, putting on his cap and gown quite mechanically, and going over to the door. 'You had better come too, Flowers.'

Herbert followed him down the staircase, and paused, as he had never paused before, at Geraint's door. It would be better, they decided, not to knock; there would be no cheery voice to shout, 'Come in!'

They opened the door softly, and entered. Geraint's father and Mr. Routh were still in that inner room, from which a low moaning sound, unlike any sound Herbert had ever heard before, issued. The men stood uncovered, and Brown's eyes swept in one hurried glance every piece of furniture in the room in quest of Hebe's letter, but it was nowhere to be seen.

Herbert walked over to the fireplace, and took a survey of the nondescript litter on the high mantelpiece. His eyes fell on Hebe's likeness, looking down upon him in her beauty and her pride. Brown's eyes fell on it in the same moment, and the two men exchanged rapid glances of intelligence; but before Herbert could raise his hand to remove it the tutor entered the room.

He blushed dreadfully, as if caught in a felonious act, and covered his confusion by drawing the fire together. It had burned quite hollow, and all the fairy castles that had been upreared had fallen in with a crash.

'It will be better to let it go out,' said the tutor; 'there will be nobody here to-night; the room will be locked up.'

Brown looked over at Herbert, but he was silent, and studying the pattern of the tiled hearth.

'Oh,' he said humbly, 'if—if I might be allowed to watch here,

I don't like leaving him alone;' and the soft-hearted fellow burst into tears.

Geraint's father entered while he was speaking. He was so like Geraint himself that Herbert involuntarily started—like Geraint, grown old, and gray, and broken down by some overwhelming sorrow. He had heard Brown's words, and he came over and wrung his hand silently. When he could command himself, he said :

'You were my son's friend, and—and I thank you for your sympathy.'

He spoke in a broken voice, but it was the voice of Geraint that spoke. The tone—the familiar tone—brought the first tears into Herbert's eyes.

'And this also was his friend,' said the tutor, laying his hand kindly on Herbert's arm.

He was cold and hard no longer. This common grief had broken down all his reticence.

'He was my dearest friend,' said Herbert with a catch in his throat ; 'he died in my arms.'

And then all his self-restraint was swept away, and he flung himself sobbing on the couch. The tutor would have led him away, but Geraint's father interposed.

'No, no,' he said ; 'let him stay. It will do me good to have someone here who knew my boy—oh, my darling boy !—and who loved him !'

Sobs choked his utterance, and Herbert pressed the hand he had given him silently, and the tutor went out and left them together.

While they were yet talking, the postman's familiar rap was heard on the outer door, and the letter fell into the room.

'For my son ?' said Geraint's father, holding out his hand mechanically for the letter.

'For me,' said Brown unblushingly, putting the pink scented missive in his pocket. 'I have my letters left here ; it saves the man going up.'

And then Geraint's father began pacing the room in Geraint's old impatient manner—the same restlessness ; the same undecided action ; the same thoughtful, thoughtless gait, stopping every now and then to look at objects with keen, critical eyes, as if all the world depended on the result, while the mind was far away ; seeing the smallest minutia, insensible to every object. Herbert and Brown watched him while he paced the familiar room, pausing before the pictures, lingering over the writing-table where Geraint's books and papers were scattered about in his usual reckless, untidy fashion, but always pausing before *that* door, as if something sacred were behind it.

How long he kept this restless vigil they could not tell, as they sat dazed and silent by that familiar hearth. What visions must have arisen before their minds of the gay scenes that had been

enacted there! The orgies—no, distinctly *no*—the thoughtless wine-parties, the gambling and riot and youthful follies, the generous, lavish hospitality, the healthy, manly enthusiasm in all noble sports, the chivalrous defence of all things pure and good—they recalled all this as they sat by his deserted hearth.

‘And what is this?’ asked the unhappy man, as he paused in his walk before the portmanteaus that were lying ready strapped upon the floor.

‘Oh, he was going down as soon as the races were over. He had got his *exeat*,’ said Herbert, quite truthfully.

‘Oh, my boy! My poor boy! Yes; he has got his *exeat*!’ and again the unhappy parent broke into a passion of grief. ‘“O Absalom! my son, my son!”’

They had hoped that he would not observe the likeness on the mantelpiece, but Herbert dared not remove it. He stopped before all the familiar home pictures on the walls—the things that Geraint loved to collect around him: the crayon drawing of the old family place; the feeble water-colour of the beech avenue in the park; the rude, unskilful sketches of the rough collie dog, the worn-out old mare knee-deep in meadow grass, the church on the hill, the kennel in the valley, the lodge gate, with the gardener’s children peeping through. They all had a voice to the unhappy man wandering among the *lares et penates* of his dead son.

‘And who is this?’ he asked, looking up at Hebe’s beautiful face smiling down with that dreamy, passionate smile that had no charm for him.

‘Oh, this belongs to me,’ said Brown, with unblushing effrontery. ‘It’s a girl I was once engaged to.’

Oh, Maria!

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE WHITE FLOWER OF A BLAMELESS LIFE.

‘An awful thought, a life removed;
The human-hearted man I loved,
A spirit, not a breathing voice.’

THERE never had been so full an attendance at morning chapel at Trinity during the Lent term as there was the morning succeeding the accident. The undergraduate benches were crowded, and the men looked across the gloom at each other with white, stricken faces.

‘Oh, Flowers, it might have been me!’ said Spurway, stopping him on the steps as they came out of chapel; ‘it would have been me if you had refused, as I should have been the right weight!’

He didn’t ‘confound the beggar’s impudence’ now.

'It would certainly have been me but for that sudden faintness,' said Number Five, with a stricken look on his face. 'It's nothing short of a miracle it wasn't.'

'A few ounces more weight and it would have been me,' said Herbert with a sigh. He was thinking he should not have been so much missed as Geraint. But before he had got half-way across the Great Court, the face of the little mother at Bideford rose up before him, and he humbly thanked God for his deliverance.

Oh, what a day it was at Trinity!

There was a change, that every undergraduate was conscious of, in the moral atmosphere of the place. A spasm of virtuous reaction had run through every court and up every college staircase. There was not an oath heard in Trinity; there was not a knave or queen seen in a single man's rooms throughout that sad week. The college smoking concert was put off, and the debate at the Union deferred; and men trod softly and spoke in hushed voices as they passed through the silent courts.

The comic man of Trinity, Cudworth, was as limp and dejected as the once brilliant Jackdaw of Rheims, and in the place of the cheerful 'Caw!' with which he habitually climbed the staircase, he whispered the old familiar refrain, 'Kicklebury Brown,' under his breath to a Psalm tune.

There was an inquest held the following day in the Great Hall. The room was quite full of University men, and Geraint's father came in on the arm of the Master.

We will draw a veil over that sad, sad scene. No regrets nor recriminations could bring back the bright young life. It was nobody's fault; but everybody was to blame. The marvel was, not that the accident had happened, but that it had not happened before. Every boating man present could remember a hundred hairbreadth escapes.

The jury returned a verdict of 'Accidental Death,' with a rider appended cautioning the boat club on the further use of such sharply-pointed bows to their boats.

This, indeed, was the only outcome of the inquest.

A special captain's meeting was called later on by the President of the C.U.B.C., and the use of indiarubber buffers, or, rather, protective knobs of indiarubber, on the bows of the boats was decided on in all future bumping races on the Cam.

There was nothing more to be done but those sad last things. The poor bereaved father had broken so completely down at the inquest, that it was deemed advisable for him to return to town until the day of the funeral.

The oak of Geraint's room was closed after the jury had viewed the body, and except that sad black procession that glided stealthily through the court bearing the last necessary equipment for all future needs, the rooms were unopened during the day.

When night came, still and shivering, the men came sadly out of

Hall and dispersed silently to their rooms. One of the crew, who rowed Six, followed Herbert up the stairs and asked if he might come in for a few minutes' talk.

There was only one subject he could talk about as he sat with a blanched face by Herbert's hearth—his miraculous escape. The prow of the Emmanuel boat had glided by him, and passing over his rigger, had pierced Geraint. He was sure that it was his dead mother's hand that had averted the danger, her prayers alone that had saved him.

And then, while the softening mood was on him, he went on to tell Herbert how she had made him promise to say his prayers night and morning at Eton, and how the other fellows had laughed him out of it; how he had begun his schoolboy life by reading first a chapter, and then a verse a day—and then none at all: how he had been led into all sorts of youthful follies—card-playing, gambling, betting—and how he and Spurway had spent their Sundays at a village near Cambridge in unseemly ways.

The poor, broken-down fellow made this frank confession of all his misdeeds to his brother-undergraduate with a simple, straightforward manliness that went to Herbert's heart. His mother, he told him, had died while he was yet at Eton, and he had been sent for hurriedly, and with her dying breath she had implored him to live a useful Christian life, not a life of ease and self-seeking. 'What if he had been called to meet her?'

Jayne came in while he was making his unreserved confession, and Herbert left them together.

It was quite late that night when Brown came in and borrowed the key of Herbert's oak. He gave it to him without any questions, supposing that he had mislaid his own; but Brown did not cross the landing at once to his own rooms, but went down the stairs. It was so late that Herbert wondered where he could be going, and went over to the door to call after him. But Brown had not gone far. The lights on the college staircase were out, but looking down over the stairs in the gloom he saw, by the light of the candle that Brown carried, that he was fumbling at the lock of Geraint's oak, first, trying one key, then another. At last he got one to fit, and noiselessly entered the room, closing the door softly after him.

What business could he have there at that hour?

Herbert asked himself the question as he sat by his fire, leaving his door ajar to see him as he came up.

But Brown did not come up, and Herbert dozed, and his fire burned low, and still in the silence of the night he heard him moving about in the room beneath. His nerves were so overstrung he could bear the suspense no longer; he must find out what Brown was doing.

He went quietly down the stairs and softly opened the door of Geraint's room, and there, before the poor fellow's writing-table,

on his knees, was Brown. He was so intent upon turning out and examining every scrap of paper that the drawers contained that he did not hear Herbert enter the room. On the floor, with the contents scattered about, were the portmanteaus that Geraint was to have taken with him on his journey. Evidently every drawer and piece of furniture in the room, and the pockets of his clothes even, had been ransacked and turned out in a thorough and exhaustive search.

For what?

Herbert asked himself the question fearfully, as he watched the nervous working of Brown's anxious face.

A horrible misgiving seized him, and he went out of the room as softly as he had come in, and groped his way upstairs.

Was Brown searching for that wretched I.O.U. that might, that *must*, fall into Geraint's father's hands?

For a whole hour Herbert tormented himself with this horrible suggestion. He knew how weak Brown was; he knew every flaw and failing in that faulty character. 'And if he found it, what would he do with it? He couldn't repudiate the debt, though not half a dozen men in the college knew of it.'

He turned the miserable suggestion of Brown's guilt over in his mind until he was quite sick; but still Brown did not come upstairs. Should he go down and stop that dreadful inquisition into the dead man's secrets? Should he go down and save Brown from himself?

He went down on his knees on that bit of worn carpet first, and then he went downstairs.

He opened Geraint's door, not softly now, but with an intention of being heard; but he paused on the threshold.

Brown's back was towards him, and he was bending over the fireplace, where a flame that he was continually feeding with papers was flaring up the chimney.

By the light of the flame Brown's poor, weak face was radiant and shining. He turned his head when the door opened, and met Herbert's eyes. One look told him how unworthy were his suspicions—how he had wronged Brown.

'See,' said Brown with an air of satisfaction, rubbing his hands, 'I have burnt 'em all. I haven't left a corner unsearched. I have turned out every drawer, and pocket, and desk, and bag; there isn't one left to witness against him;' and as he spoke he drew the ashes together, and threw the last fragments of the dainty pink notes, so carefully treasured by the dead man, into the flame.

'We must go and tell him now,' he said when the flame had died quite out, and he led the way into the inner chamber.

Herbert had not seen Geraint since they had brought him back. He had never seen death in any form before, and he was unprepared for the change that death stamps on the familiar face,

Familiar, alas! no longer.

The same, but not the same. Every noble lineament of the marble face was so much nobler. Every tender trait that made him the lovable, high-souled, chivalrous nature he was, was so much tenderer. The death-smile had but stamped in ineffable sweetness all that had endeared him to every soul in the college.

Brown laid his hands on the cold, waxen fingers that were crossed over his manly breast—the kind hands that had saved him from dishonour and death.

‘It’s all right, dear fellow,’ he said, bending over the still face and clasping the cold, dead hands; ‘it’s all right. I’ve destroyed all those miserable letters. There’s not a line left among all your papers that your mother may not see. There’s not a letter left among them that your sisters may not read.’

‘It’s the only return I could make him, Flowers,’ he explained as they groped their way up the dark staircase, for his candle had burnt itself out. ‘It’s the only return that I can make him now for what he has done for me. There will never be a shadow on his dear memory now—not the faintest shadow, thank God!’

When Herbert and Brown talked the matter over on the day following, Brown remarked, incidentally, it was a very odd thing, but he had not come across the paper he had given Geraint for the two hundred and seventy-five pounds he had let him have.

‘I have looked through every paper the dear fellow has left behind him,’ said Brown, ‘not for that, but for those other things; but I never came across it. If it had been there I *must* have seen it. Can he have destroyed it?’

And then Herbert all at once remembered that little sealed package of papers that Geraint had given him to destroy on the night before the boat-race.

He brought it sorrowfully out of the drawer, where he had locked it away in Geraint’s presence, and laid it on the table between them, and told Brown how it had come into his hands, and the promise he had solemnly given the dead man.

‘I think the time has now come for me to fulfil his last injunctions,’ he said, stirring the fire into a cheerful blaze, and looking meaningly at Brown.

Brown’s face was working strangely as he laid his hand upon Herbert’s arm, and stopped him in the act of dropping the packet into the flames.

‘Stop,’ he said huskily; ‘you have no right to do this, knowing what you now know. If you had done it yesterday, you would have been justified; but not now. You know, and I know, that that paper is in here;’ and he tapped the packet in Herbert’s hand as he spoke. ‘The dear fellow had put it in here in order that it should never witness against me. His last generous thought was for me—thank God for it! But though I love him and honour him for it more than I can ever express, I have no right to accept it from him. We must put the packet in his father’s hands,

Flowers, and you must open it in his presence and take that paper out.'

Herbert was humiliated into the dust when he remembered his unjust suspicions of this weak, simple fellow, who could rise to heights of self-denial and sacrifice he had never dreamed of.

Later in the day Geraint's friends arrived, for the funeral was to be on the morrow. Herbert saw them from his window crossing the Great Court. On the arm of Geraint's father was a tall lady dressed in black, and closely veiled. A tall, elegant woman, with a noble air, as of one accustomed to command. This could not be Geraint's mother, he told himself, with a catch in his breath; 'surely this must be Mary Barclay!'

He heard them enter and close the door of that room below, and he sat with his face in his hands picturing that sad meeting. He remembered with, oh! so much thankfulness, that Brown had brought away the photograph of Hebe, and that those tell-tale letters would never be read by the woman the poor fellow had deceived.

It might have been an hour later when Geraint's father knocked at his door and begged him and Brown to come down to his son's rooms. They followed him down the staircase silently, and into the familiar room. It had all been restored to its former state, and the portmanteaus on the floor had been repacked, before Brown had left the room the previous night; but there were still the ashes of Hebe's letters in the grate.

A tall, stately figure robed in black stood beside Geraint's writing-table. It turned slowly as they entered, and looked at them—a pale, grave woman's face, not strictly beautiful, but with an indescribable majesty in it.

She advanced slowly, with her rich sable dress trailing on the floor, and her veil thrown back, to where they stood uncovered and abashed before the sacredness of her grief. She held out her hand to Herbert, but she took no notice of Brown.

'You loved him,' she said by way of introduction, looking straight into his eyes with her white, set face.

'I loved him dearly,' he answered in a low voice that he made a vain effort to steady; 'who could help loving him?'

He paused; he could not go on speaking in a general way when he saw the desperate hunger in her eyes.

'But'—and here his lip trembled as he spoke—'but Brown here loved him more than any of us. He had reason to. He saved his life.'

She turned from him and held out her hand to Brown, and her voice was softer as she spoke to him:

'He saved your life?'

Brown took her outstretched hand humbly, but he could not meet her eyes.

The poor, tender-hearted fellow was so overcome that he turned his head aside to hide his tears.

'My life?—not mine alone—the lives and happiness of all I love. I was in ghastly trouble, and—and he was my salvation! I should not be here now to tell the story had he not come to me, unsought, and lifted me out of a bottomless pit of despair. When you know *that*, you will know *why* I love him!'

'I understand,' she said softly, checking Brown's confession; and then with a sudden gesture of despair and a low cry, the bitterness of which rung in Herbert's ears for many days, she exclaimed: 'but, oh, what is your love to mine? Do you know? I—I was to have married him!'

The remembrance of her own grief sealed the fountain of her tears, and her marble face, which had flushed into life at Brown's broken words, grew white and hard again.

Later in the day Brown brought Geraint's father up into Herbert's room, and told him of the sealed packet and the instructions concerning it.

'I have no desire to pry into my dear boy's secrets,' he said, and a mist rose up before his eyes as he spoke, and blotted all the red seals on it, with the familiar crest, till they swam before his eyes like drops of blood. 'I am sure whatever they were they were honourable and manly.'

'Will you give me permission to open it?' Brown asked; 'there is a paper in it I am interested in, which you ought to—which you must see.'

'I have no wish to see it. If my dear boy had desired me to see it, he would not have sealed it up and left the instructions he has left. The trust is yours, not mine; open it if you will. I will have nothing to do with it.'

He turned away as he spoke, and looked out of the window into the gloomy court without, while Brown hurriedly broke the seals.

It seemed like sacrilege, and he opened the packet with trembling hands. It contained nothing but letters, dainty pink letters with that subtle fragrance hanging about them that Herbert remembered so well. Brown looked through them eagerly; at the bottom of the packet lay the folded paper with the formal acknowledgment of his debt, evidently added to the packet as an after-thought.

He laid this aside, and tied the packet up again, and placed it in Herbert's hands.

'Have you found what you want?' inquired Geraint's father, still with his back to them, looking out into the court.

'Yes, sir,' said Brown steadily; 'I have found this, and I beg you to read it;' and he placed the document in his hands.

He read it calmly all through, remarking even the date, and, looking over his glasses at Brown, inquired if he were the Mr. Brown referred to.

'Yes, sir,' said Brown meekly, with his eyes on the floor, and his heart full to overflowing.

'And my son lent you this money?'

'It was not money only,' said Brown, deeply moved; 'it was life and honour to me at the time. He did it unasked.'

A tender smile curled the pale lips of Geraint's father—a smile they remembered, oh, so well—and he came over to the fire where the packet containing Hebe Bellenden's letters was sending a fierce flame up the chimney. 'My son never did things by halves, sir,' said the father proudly. 'He did not desire this obligation to be remembered. His last act and wish, which I carry out gladly, thankfully, cancels the debt for ever;' and he held the paper in the flame until it was consumed, and dropped from his fingers into the midst of the ashes of Hebe's letters.

There was a funeral service held next day in the college chapel, and Geraint's coffin was placed in the aisle between the rows of white-robed undergraduates, many of whom realized, perhaps, for the first time, the near and personal significance of death. The solemn presence which had brushed so closely by them had left its passing shadow on every careless face.

Loving hands had robbed it, so far as love could reach, of its gloom, and the coffin was heaped up with white flowers, and Geraint's vacant seat in the chapel of his college, among the third-year men, was filled with wreaths and crosses of pale flowers—fit emblems of him who had passed from among them wearing the white flower of a blameless life.

There was only one dark spot amid all that profusion of pale blossoms—a tiny wreath of purple violets, made by a woman's hand, and wet still with a woman's tears.

Hebe had sent it with a pleading message that Herbert could not resist, and he had placed it with his own hands on her lover's bier.

There was not a dry eye in the great white-robed company, and the Dean's voice faltered and failed as he read the most touching words written by human pen, in that brief committal of all that is finite to the immeasurable compassion of the Infinite.

The college servants stood weeping round the chapel-door, and the bedmakers gathered in knots, with their aprons to their eyes, in the Great Court outside. There was only one tearless face in the vast crowd that filled the chapel, and that was the white unmoved face of Mary Barclay.

There had never been a more hearty service within those historic walls, and the choir of Trinity had not the singing by any means to themselves.

'Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom;
Lead Thou me on!'

As the holy invocation floated upward from so many fresh young voices, from so many softened hearts, pulsing with all the eager warmth of early manhood, in a murmur so fervent and intense, it

seemed like the articulation of every heart-beat of the vast white-robed congregation.

Brown, impatient of restraint and dreadfully out of tune, kept a syllable or two in advance all through the hymn, and lingered on the closing cadence, oblivious to all sense of time and place, and finished it off entirely on his own responsibility, long after the trained voices of the choir had ceased.

Nature, in sympathy with the grief within the chapel, was raining her cold tears down on the roof and the court without, and the painted windows were blotched and blurred with great tears running down the panes.

It was the longest funeral cortège that ever started from Trinity: not only the men of his own college, but the men of Emmanuel—the saddest mourners, perhaps, of all—and the crews of all the college boats, and many of the tutors and men of other colleges.

It was the saddest weather, stormy and wet without, and mud, mud, mud, deep in all the roads through which the long, black, silent procession wound, and sadder and wetter in the green churchyard where it rested, and where the men stood among the graves knee-deep in soddened grass.

Herbert was so far off that he could only hear the opening words 'I am the Resurrection and the Life'; and he kept repeating them softly to himself throughout the service. But Brown would not be kept back: he pressed through the crowd to the front, and stood bare-headed in the rain beside the open grave.

Mary Barclay saw him as she bent down to take her last look at the coffin of her dead love, and across Geraint's grave she saw the face of Brown. She had never shed a tear throughout that trying ordeal, and her noble face had hardened with its stony grief into rigid lines, like a face chiselled in marble.

The tears were running down Brown's face, and he was sobbing as if his soft, manly heart would break, as he looked down into the yawning chasm at his feet, where Nature's tears were falling on the white flowers of the wreaths, and on the dark violet spot in their midst, that looked to him, in his jealous love, like a purple stain.

The sight of the faithful fellow's grief broke Mary Barclay down, as her own grief had failed to, and she broke out suddenly into an uncontrollable fit of sobbing, as they bore her away to the carriages waiting at the gate.

CHAPTER XXVII.

'SPARRING.'

'I—J, at least, will have a mill to-night !'

THERE was another name painted in white letters over the door of Geraint's rooms when Herbert came back after the Easter vacation.

He saw it as he climbed the staircase when he came back, with his little shabby portmanteau in his hand, and it made him shiver and turn cold.

He had only been down to Lynn with Jayne, and he had been reading hard all the vac., so that he was not very much fresher for the change.

He had not yet learnt the lesson, always so sadly learnt, of faith, submission, and realization of the Unseen. There was a void in his life now—a page folded down among those records of youthful friendships that he could never turn again without a pang.

Sorrow and Death had been busy at Trinity during the short vacation, and the gentle mistress had been removed from the Lodge. There was a feeble, broken-hearted old man wandering sadly about the courts, and sitting, with his face buried in his hands, in the Master's seat in chapel. He was no longer formidable, and his rustling silk gown no longer struck awe into the hearts of conscience-stricken undergraduates.

Herbert met him once in the cloisters, where he walked so often now, and so late, when the shadows of the soft spring evenings were closing in. He stopped him as he was passing softly by with his head uncovered.

'I have to thank you, Mr. Flowers——' he began in his old stately way, and then he burst into tears and laid his trembling hand on Herbert's arm. 'I have to thank you,' he continued in a broken voice, 'for—for the comfort your visit gave my dear wife. I mean the comfort she derived from your account of the mysterious call which summoned you to Mr. Brown's assistance. It confirmed a deeply-felt conviction in her mind of the near connection between this life and the future one. It soothed her last moments with a certain hope that—that the separation, so bitter to me, would be no real separation ; that she would be with me still, within speaking distance, but, alas ! beyond sight and touch.'

He had forgotten Herbert's presence, and was repeating to himself, in an anguished voice, 'Beyond sight and touch !'

Herbert crept softly away. This tower of strength and learning,

which had once struck awe into every heart in Trinity, so broken and enfeebled by sorrow, was too sacred a sight for him to intrude upon, and he crept humbly away, while the great man wandered alone through the darkening cloisters, making his feeble, inarticulate moan.

He met Lilian Howell once in the ante-chapel. He would have passed her with that conscious blush upon his face her presence always stirred, but she stopped him. He had not seen her since the day of Geraint's funeral, when, from her seat beneath the organ-loft, she had looked across the white-robed congregation, at Brown singing all alone, with a film of tears glistening in her eyes.

There were no tears in her eyes now, but there were dark shadows beneath them, and she was looking white and thin.

'My aunt,' she said softly, but in a steady voice, and her gray eyes were looking through Herbert as she spoke, 'left a message for you, Mr. Flowers: I was to thank you in her name for—for the comfort you had given her, and—and—in her name to say, "God bless you!"'

She said it very solemnly, and Herbert bowed his head very low—it seemed like the benediction of an angel; and when he looked up she was gone.

She never spoke to him again that term, and when she met him in the court, if she didn't exactly look over his head, she never looked kindly at him. Her white, set, serious face said as plain as plain could be:

'I am dreadfully disappointed in you, Mr. Flowers.'

At least he read it so.

He saw no more of the Bellendens that term, and when once, by accident, he passed the house, there were printed bills on either gate of the Myrtles, and on bits of carpet hanging out of the windows, announcing a sale by auction of the elegant and useful household furniture.

Mr. Grinley he met once or twice in the streets of Cambridge, but that gentleman, who wore an eyeglass, was deeply interested when he passed him in the contemplation of a distant object, and his amiable dog, with his unfailing sagacity, made a snap at his heels as he passed.

He saw him yet once again, driving in a high dog-cart on a country road some miles outside Cambridge; at least, the lady beside him was driving, and it did not need the bull-dog behind to tell him that that inconsequent Jehu was Julie.

Madam Spurway had not been seen so frequently in the streets of Cambridge of late. It was hinted that she had widened her horizon, and discovered other fields and pastures new—the downs of Newmarket among them—for the display of her charms and her toilettes.

Rumour had whispered that there was a breach in the ménage of

the Hôtel Spurway, as his friends good-naturedly called the little villa at Trumpington ; and rumour for once was right. A change had come over Spurway, as, indeed, who was not changed in some way by the recent accident, among the careless as well as the thoughtful undergraduates of Trinity? He turned up at chapel with surprising regularity, and for the time had severed his connection with the turf ; and, though he still continued to give wines pretty freely, there was not a card turned in his rooms during the remainder of the term.

He came to see Herbert when he came up, and brought him a very tender message from the little mother. He was drifting off from his old fast set, with whose sayings and doings we have no business in these pages, and he had not yet joined another set. A good deal of his old conceit was taken out of him, but he was not yet quite prepared to be seen beyond the courts of his college with a man whose coat was shining at the seams, and, meanwhile, he had ceased to 'confound the beggar's impudence.'

Brown had come up before him, and was already at work. A change had come over Brown, too, during that short Easter vacation, and it was rumoured among his friends that he had turned over a new leaf.

He had already turned over a good many in his time. He went to chapel with surprising regularity, and was reported to be working hard for his degree. But no amount of lectures, or chapels, or reading, could satisfy Brown's newly-awakened conscience. His third year had been full of large dreams and small performances, and had ended in disgrace. His fourth year had found him humbled, and with no faith left in himself.

All his struggles to set himself right had ended in failure and disappointment. He had ceased entirely to believe in Richard Brown. He wasn't at all surprised that Maria had given him up. He had never been good enough for her—and she was an angel !

The angel was going to marry a country surgeon in good practice, shortly. And the satisfaction that Brown derived from the suffering her inconstancy inflicted on his faithful heart was, indeed, quite remarkable. He was never happy or satisfied with himself in these early days of reformation unless he were doing the most disagreeable things in the world, and denying himself everything that he most desired.

It was the only way, he told Herbert, to keep himself right. It was a great secret, and he had found it out, and he recommended it to him.

It wasn't very new to Herbert. He had tried it already, of necessity, too often.

Jayne had tried it so long that it had ceased to be painful, and had become part of his nature ; but he encouraged it in Brown.

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the old days they made martyrs of. The weak, pliable clay that, turned on the wheel by the Master's hand, becomes a vessel of honour. The more he is emptied of self, the more ready he will be for the Master's use, and He will use him in His own time.'

Though he had so much reading to do for his degree, and it was his last chance, Brown devoted three evenings a week to Barnwell, and took a district for daily visiting in the most unsavoury court of that unsavoury quarter.

And Jayne, who had taken his degree at Christmas, and was in residence as a bachelor attending divinity lectures, had the temerity to encourage him in it.

Harvard had thrown himself more heartily into the mission work at Barnwell since the accident on the river.

'I must work it off somehow,' he explained. 'I have given up boating, dearly as I love it. I can't bear the sight of the river; and I must use up the energy somehow.'

He used it up in a very unusual way.

An astonishing placard, printed in the University colour, was posted conspicuously throughout Barnwell. It announced in the first place a mission service, to be followed by an address on temperance, and at the foot of the bill occurred a remarkable line—'Sparring.'

It had the desired effect at any rate. It attracted an unusually large audience. Usually a few women and children made up the scanty audience at these mission services; but to-night the benches were well filled, and there was a large sprinkling of men.

Later on in the evening, when the exciting event might be expected to come off, a crowd of loafers hung round the door. They had let the women and children have the preaching and the hymns all to themselves, but they were quite willing to come in at the end, and get what fun they could out of it.

Perhaps they did not get too much fun in their lives at any time. There were no delightful games of skill for them—no manly recreation to develop pluck, perseverance and muscle. There was only the public-house round the corner, and the taproom, with its glowing curtain.

When the address was over and the hymn was sung, Harvard requested the women and children to withdraw, as he had a few words to say to the men. But very few ladies availed themselves of this permission. Some mothers took their children to the door and dismissed them, returning themselves to enjoy the afterpiece, Tommy's mother among the number, Tommy's little brother having evinced a lively and precocious interest in the proceedings.

When the door was opened for the men they came in noisily, with an assumption of bluster and a not-to-be-convinced-by-you-kind of manner. There was the usual amiable struggle for the best seats, or for some point of vantage where they could get the

best view of the raised platform upon which were the small party of undergraduates.

Brown came forward modestly, looking limp and dejected. He was not a favourable specimen of the Cambridge undergraduate, with his ragged gown, and disreputable cap, and his frayed waistcoat, with a button or two missing, and his trousers baggy at the knees.

'Fact is,' he explained uneasily, 'I have no right to be here; not, at least, as an advocate of temperance. I haven't tried it long enough to tell you anything about it. I don't know, indeed, why my friends have put me forward to speak to you;' and he looked round with a puzzled, inquiring air at Jayne and Harvard, who stood behind him.

'Go on, old fellow!' said Harvard encouragingly, and Jayne only smiled and nodded.

'Oh, I have it!' said Brown, beaming in his usual delightful way; 'I have come before you as an example of the other side!'

And as he spoke his face grew clouded and grave, and in a few words he told them how his University career had been marred, and his life spoiled by thoughtless, selfish indulgence; how he had broken the heart of the kindest of fathers; how he had sacrificed the affections of the best of women; how in a moment of desperation he had attempted his own life. If there ever had been a prodigal in the University of Cambridge, that poor shamed wretch now stood before them. He had taken the portion that appertained to him, and he had gone into a far country, and wasted that carefully-hoarded patrimony in drunkenness and riotous living. There was not a man in Cambridge who had led such a foolish life; he had not only partaken of the husks rejected by the swine, the scum of the University, but he had sunk still lower: he had been swine among swine. And out of all this filth, out of the mire of despair, a kind hand had raised him, and he had arisen, like the prodigal of old, and he had gone to his Father.

He paused and looked round, with the tears in his eyes, blurring all the faces before him like faces in a moving glass.

'Oh, my friends,' he said huskily, 'I don't think that there is a man here who has wasted his life and his opportunities like I have; but I have, thank God! left the husks and the swine behind, and I have returned to my Father's house, and I have found—what you all will find—an abundant welcome!'

'You don't look much the better for it!' said a voice from the crowd.

'No,' said Brown humbly, 'I am a poor creature; I suppose I don't. It's all the more astonishing that He should call me to this work—I, who look so unfitted for it. Perhaps He, who doesn't see as we see, sees a fitness in me for it which you cannot see, and which I do not feel. I sometimes read a passage which you all

know, "He hath chosen the weak things of this world, and the foolish things, and the base things hath God chosen, and the things that are despised," and then I say to myself, "That's why He has chosen me."

Harvard was the next speaker—an address of few words, and to the purpose, hitting out straight from the shoulder.

'You've seen my friend,' he began, 'and he's told you what drink did for him, and what profit he had in those things whereof he is now ashamed, and now you see me ;' and he showed his magnificent frame, tall and straight, and clean-limbed, and with the strength of a giant ; 'and I am going to tell you, or show you rather, what temperance—spell it with a big "T," if you please—has done for me.'

He told it in a very few words, for his audience were getting impatient.

'How long have 'ee taken the pledge, mister ?' inquired a voice from the crowd.

'I haven't taken it at all,' he answered ; 'at least, I have taken a higher pledge,' and he raised his eyes with that upward look in them which is the one outward sign of his particular order. He did it quite naturally and involuntarily.

'How long have 'ee tried it, eh, mister ? Not long, I'll be bound,' remarked another voice from the crowd.

'I've never tried anything else,' Harvard answered quietly. 'I have never tasted a drop of intoxicating liquor in my life. And if you want to see what cold water will do for a man, how it will make his body healthy, vigorous, and strong, how it will keep his brain cool and clear, and strengthen his muscles, fitting him for the battle of life, I shall be very happy to put on the gloves and spar with anyone present, as the champion of the cause I advocate—*Temperance versus Alcohol*.'

He suited the action to the word, and threw off his academical gown and coat and stood before them in his flannels, and a thin silk vest that showed every muscle and every tough sinew of his magnificent frame.

There was a movement in the crowd, and the champion of Barnwell came forward—a big hulking fellow, with the strength of a giant and the coarse, bull-dog countenance of his species. He undressed deliberately, and when he stood naked to the waist a hoarse murmur ran through the audience, and Herbert exchanged a rapid glance with Jayne, who nodded back encouragingly.

Herbert didn't like the look of him. Evidently he had been trained professionally in the noble art of self-defence, and he had the physical strength of a bull, and the crowd were cheering him at the top of their lungs as he came slouching up the platform.

Harvard measured his antagonist in a glance—plenty of muscle, some rude skill, and the strength of a bull. He played very steadily at first, and kept on the defensive. The man was out of training.

and his movements were slow and awkward, but he had the tremendous advantage of weight and superior strength.

He fought with indomitable pluck and obstinacy, but he lacked the quickness, decision and endurance of his antagonist, and he winded himself in his futile efforts to get at him. Once he had to call 'time,' and a dull roar went round the room from his friends.

Harvard made no attack, but he held himself well together, and kept on his legs, and his length of arm gave him the advantage in every encounter.

The friends of the Barnwell champion encouraged him in true Barnwell fashion, and the murmur had risen to an ominous roar.

Harvard was too well aware of his antagonist's bullish power to come within his reach, but he had his work quite cut out to avoid his rushes. With the rapidity of thought he eluded his opponent every time, keeping his elbows well down to his sides so as to be able to hit straighter and quicker when the time came; but that didn't come very often, and Barnwell, getting hot and furious, and careless of guarding, by-and-by made a terrific lunge, which Harvard avoided; and, not meeting with the expected resistance, the big bully over-balanced himself, and fell heavily forward on his face.

Again that roar, sullen no longer, but furious, rose from the crowd, that by this time had filled the room to suffocation, and men, women, and children were jumbled together in one heaving mass.

Jayne looked anxiously across the sea of angry faces to the women. Why hadn't they gone out when he told them to? It was too late to talk of going out now, and Tommy's little brother had already had enough of it, and was beginning to cry.

Oh, why had he ever consented to this mad scheme? Why had he ever listened to these young enthusiasts, and brought this reproach on the mission and the cause?

It was too late to ask any of these questions now. There was a madman on the platform and an infuriated mob below.

'I think our friend here has proved the endurance and staying power that——' Jayne began; but his words were drowned in a volley of hoarse cries, mingled freely with execrations:

'Go at him, Bill!' 'Finish him off!' 'Fair play! fair play!'

'Fair play, by all means!' said Harvard, coming forward. 'Come on again, if you haven't had enough!'

Enraged and excited by the cries of the crowd that was surging wildly around the platform, Barnwell came on.

This time his rush was fast and furious, but Harvard, who had read his man pretty accurately, was expecting it, and met him with a steady counter. On he came again, baffled, but more furious than before, and more off his guard; but Harvard had seen that

when he was foiled, and he fell savagely back, he was shifting his glove.

There was a little gleam of humour, or determination, or both, in the American's blue eyes, that flashed as cold and as keen as steel blades as he advanced to meet the infuriated giant, who came forward again with a wild rush, his eyes bloodshot and his head down, and the muscles and sinews of his great bull neck standing out like cords. Harvard met this hasty advance by a sudden side-movement, half spring, half step, not only eluding his opponent's terrific charge, but, his feet being at right angles to the lines in which he formerly stood, the incautious champion of Barnwell and alcohol tripped over his leg and fell heavily to the ground. He lay there stunned for some moments, and a hoarse cry arose from the crowd.

Some one called 'time,' but still the champion of Barnwell lay where he fell, a still, inert, purple, senseless mass. He had fallen on his head, which, bullock-fashion, he had kept persistently forward.

A wild yell rose from the crowd below, and in a moment the struggling, swearing mob came surging up the steps of the platform. Harvard threw off the gloves and hastily resumed his coat and waistcoat. He had scarcely time to put on his gown before it was seized by a dozen hands and rent from his grasp. This was a signal for a general *mêlée*, and the gownsmen found themselves in a moment the centre of an infuriated mob.

Jayne stood up in the midst blandly waving his hand for silence, and Brown began feebly to quaver the first few notes of a hymn. But it was no use; the rowdy element was in the ascendant. After one or two ineffectual efforts he gave it up and looked anxiously among the crowd at the women and children, who were gathered up in a frightened heap.

There was no way out but the one narrow entrance, and the more timid, seeing a row inevitable, struggled for the door, while the crowd surged wildly up on the platform, and, with fierce cries and execrations, surrounded the gownsmen. Barnwell meanwhile had recovered himself and risen, and was shouting wildly to Harvard to 'Come on! come on!'

'No, we have had enough for to-night,' said Harvard good-naturedly; 'you have fought very well; but you see water is better than beer.'

The end of the sentence was drowned in a roar from the mob, who had closed around him, and were trying their best to drag his gown off his back.

'It wasn't fair! another round! another round!' they shouted; 'he's funking it!'

'No,' said Harvard decidedly; 'no more. I see I have made a mistake in having this contest at all. But I am not funking it by any means.'

Quite good-naturedly, and with as little force as was necessary, he

released himself from the arms of the bystanders, while Jayne mumbled a few quite inaudible words in the midst of a frightful din, and declared the meeting over.

It was one thing to close the meeting, and it was another to leave the hall, and when the gownsmen leapt over the platform, as the ordinary approach was blocked, they were in the midst of a fighting, struggling, panting crowd, that closed ominously around them.

Someone, no doubt with the best intentions, at this critical moment put out the gas. What happened after they couldn't very well tell, as the crowd had come between them, and they were divided and borne along through the darkness, wedged in amid a mass of struggling, panting humanity. Harvard only remembered one thing : that he had got hold of Jayne, and that if he relaxed his hold one moment the cripple would be under the feet of this reckless, infuriated mob.

He held on like grim death, and he carried him through them all into the outer air, faint and white, with tattered gown and his cap flattened over his face.

Harvard dragged him out and propped him up against a wall until he recovered himself, and could gasp out :

'Quite a mistake, well meant, but quite a mistake. I ought never to have agreed to it.'

While Jayne was feebly bewailing the lamentable issue of the meeting, Herbert was guarding Tommy's little brother and his excited parent through the crowd. She, with true feminine instinct, threatened to faint or to go off into hysterics directly she found she had a strong protector ; but she didn't do either when she found herself outside in the air with Tommy's little brother clinging wildly to her for protection. Brown turned up directly after with two mothers in Barnwell under his arms, but his gown was nearly torn off his back.

The first voice he heard outside, when he had forced a path for himself and the women through the crowd, was a very familiar voice, which demanded in suave accents the oft-repeated request :

'Your names and your colleges, gentlemen ?'

The crowd set up a derisive shout, while, breathless and panting from the mêlée, the undergraduates gave the required information.

'You will go to your colleges at once,' said the Senior Proctor severely.

'We were just going, sir, as fast as we could,' said Brown humbly.

Harvard and Jayne escaped, but Brown and Herbert were proctorized and 'gated' for a fortnight.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BROWN OF TRINITY.

'Doors where my heart was used to beat
So quickly——'

PERHAPS it was quite as well for Brown that he should be kept in durance vile, otherwise 'gated,' during those momentous weeks preceding the examination.

This disgraceful row in Barnwell was the talk of the college, and the Dean and tutors looked at the culprits with an uneasy suspicion. Had Brown really broken out again, and had he taken Flowers with him?

Boxing in Barnwell forsooth, and the credit of the college at stake!

Nobody believed Jayne when he assured his friends that he was at the bottom of it, that the blame was wholly his. No wonder they were politely and good-naturedly incredulous.

Jayne with the gloves on! He didn't look much of a figure for it, at any rate.

If the meeting had no other results, it had indirectly borne good fruit in one way; it had driven Brown back to his books.

'You must make no mistake this time, Brown,' Herbert had said to him. 'You mustn't get plucked again. Remember, this is your last chance!'

Brown remembered it so far as to take his books with him when he sculled up the river, and then, lying in the bottom of the boat, or stretched out on the grass by the bank, did his reading as seriously as the circumstances would permit. It was not a very serious way to go about it, but however gloomily, as a nation, Englishmen take their pleasures, as a University Cambridge takes its education pleasantly.

In a boat moored up under the bank, lightly arrayed in parti-coloured flannels, with a book on his knees, Mr. Brown read through the sweet May mornings preceding the examinations. Of course he might have been reading hard overnight, and had only come down here to get cool before he began to read seriously again; but his friends shook their heads and remonstrated with him. To do him justice, he really did apply himself, as the fateful days approached, with more than usual vigour. Even Herbert allowed this, and he had great doubts about him.

On the last day, which was the hottest day of the term, he sported his oak till night, and came out looking so damp and limp,

and white and nervous, that the men averred that he had sat in his bath all day, and poured cold water over himself while he was reading.

Jayne took him for a walk round the Backs, and made him listen to the nightingales, and wouldn't hear a word about his work; and after reading to him out of his little black book, made him go straight to bed.

He was white and nervous the next morning, but Jayne limped beside him to the door of the schools where the examination was held. In answer to his friends' inquiries how he had done, he answered despondently, and with evident sincerity:

'Couldn't have done worse!'

The next day brought the same tale, and so on to the end. When he came back on the last day, and it was all over, he was pale but resigned.

'Fact is,' he said, 'I have quite made up my mind to accept either success or failure as the best thing for me. Perhaps, after all, failure is the discipline I need—God knows!' and he took off his cap, with his simple face beaming, and for the first time Herbert saw in his eyes that shining upward look that he saw in Jayne's and Harvard's, as if this weak creature, disciplined by repeated failures and disasters, had at last found out where to look for the strength he lacked.

'Yes,' said Brown simply, 'I am quite prepared for the worst. I'm sorry for the poor old governor, but he'll get over it by-and-by, when he sees how much better I am for it.'

With this consoling reflection Brown put all his papers away out of sight, and recommenced operations in Barnwell.

A strange thing happened about this time. A letter, written in a firm, beautiful, characteristic lady's hand, that Herbert seemed to remember, lay on his table one morning among a heap of too familiar letters in nasty suggestive blue envelopes.

He turned it over and opened it shyly, with quite a little flutter in his heart. Who could this unknown correspondent be?

The letter was from Mary Barclay, and she had written to ask Herbert, in confidence, a strange question. What could she do for his friend Brown?

He showed this letter to Jayne, and they talked the matter over together, and they agreed that nothing could be done for Brown at present, not until he had taken his degree, if he should be so lucky as to get through; and then, if he took orders, Miss Barclay's influence might obtain him some preferment.

Herbert wrote very modestly back to the lady explaining this, and promising to acquaint her when the time arrived for helping Brown in the way that he and Jayne had decided that Brown was to be helped.

But Mary Barclay was not to be put off so easily. By the following post a letter arrived requesting Herbert, if he had no

examinations going on, and he could spare the day, to come up without delay, and call upon her at her house in town.

'Of course you will go,' said Jayne.

Herbert blushingly acknowledged that he had not the money to pay his railway fare; that last six and eightpence to the Proctor, after the Barnwell escapade, had emptied his slender purse.

Jayne's purse, by no means a plethoric one, had a great many calls upon it; but it was always at the service of a friend, so Herbert's objection was speedily overruled. Jayne looked him over when he was equipped for the journey, and he made him take it the very same day, and supplemented Herbert's toilet with a new silk tie of his own and a pair of cuffs that were not fringed at the ends, and thus smartened he limped beside him down to the railway-station.

What could she be going to do for Brown?

Mary Barclay lived in a very select London neighbourhood, abutting on one of the parks. The house was so grand, and the flunkey airing himself beneath the vast portico was so magnificent a person, that Herbert blushed and trembled before him while he inquired modestly if Miss Barclay happened to live there. She did happen, and the superior creature, after looking Herbert all over with a scornful don't-think-much-of-you air, led the way into the vestibule, while he ascertained if his mistress happened to be in to a very seedy-looking young man from the country. Herbert hadn't a card, and he sent in his name modestly as 'Flowers of Trinity.'

While he stood airing himself on the mat the inner door opened, and disclosed a line of powdered footmen, and an interior the like of which Herbert had never before beheld.

The glories of Bratton Court paled before it; the stately magnificence of Trinity Lodge, that struck awe into Herbert's heart, was as nothing compared to it. There were no marble columns at the Lodge, but there were gleaming columns here that might have been brought from the temple of Mausolus, and a marble floor worthy of the Parthenon, and a long vista of palms and exotics, and rich hangings, and noble statues, and a faint overpowering odour of wealth and ease that went direct to his lean, starved undergraduate soul.

'And Geraint was sacrificing all this for Hebe Bellenden!'

All this, when he had only seen the beginning of it—the brief preface before the story opens!

He had not to air himself on the mat very long before that inner door was again thrown open, and he stood on the marble floor, amid those magnificent creatures who eyed him superciliously as he passed (and his highlows made a dreadful noise on the marble pavement), and a stately presence in black came half-way across the hall to greet him.

'Oh, Mr. Flowers, this is so kind of you!' Mary Barclay said, as

she shook him warmly by the hand, and led him into a room beyond.

It was a lady's morning-room, and it was full of sunshine and flowers, and opened out upon a veranda, beyond which, stretching away into a wooded park, lay a close-shaven lawn, bordered with parterres of lovely flowers, and redolent with the perfume of the first breath of June.

Surely this was fairyland? Herbert had never been there, not even in his dreams, but this was the nearest approach he had ever seen to it.

He put down his shabby hat, and he took off his shabby gloves, and he resigned himself to the intoxication of the moment.

But even then, with all this sense of strangeness and unreality, he remarked how changed Mary Barclay was since he had last seen her in Geraint's rooms at Trinity. She was handsomer than ever, with a cold, proud beauty, and a sadness in her eyes that went to his heart. The freshness of her beauty was gone, but he saw in it what he had not seen there before, in the lovely face in the locked photograph on Geraint's table, in the stony, tearless face at Geraint's grave—a saddened, softened light.

'It is very kind of you to come to me so soon,' she said. 'I wanted very much to talk to you. I am deeply interested in your friend Mr. Brown. I cannot wait till he takes his degree; I cannot wait until he is ordained; I want to help him now.'

Herbert looked round the fairy bower where the wealth of Aladdin might have been lavished. He could not doubt her power to help Brown; but how?

He sat silent; he had no suggestion to make. She couldn't possibly give him money, and Geraint had already paid his debts. And then he remembered the night school, and the row in Barnwell, and how abortive had been their well-meaning attempts to help the people. He told her, quite irrelevantly, all about it, very diffidently at first, and with some little hesitation.

It was not exactly a subject for a morning call. She listened to the end; and when Herbert got warm, and dwelt in glowing terms on Harvard's prowess, and the defeat of the big giant—the advocate of drink and ignorance—she smiled, and tears trembled in her eyes.

'So like him,' she said softly; 'I must know this brave American friend of yours, Mr. Flowers.'

'He's a splendid fellow!' said Herbert warmly; 'he's like Geraint.'

'I'm sure he is,' she said quietly. 'He is like—like he would have been had he any cause to advocate.'

And then, sitting there in the warm June sunshine, with that sense of rest and ease, he told her that other story of Brown's disaster—he didn't dwell much upon his own share in it—and of the vengeance that Geraint and Harvard executed upon the offender in the Great Court of King's.

The sunshine was streaming in upon her as she sat amid her flowers by the open window, and it touched the tears that dropped from her eyes. Not knowing that Herbert saw them, she set herself quietly to get the better of them.

'It was well done; it was splendidly done!' she said, with just a little quaver in her voice. 'I must see this brave friend of yours—of his. When can I come? When can I know him? When you know me better, Mr. Flowers, you will understand my impatience. I can never bear to wait. I have been humoured, spoiled, all my life. I have had everything I wanted, and directly I wanted it. I have never known what disappointment or denial meant—until now.'

She stopped suddenly, and the hard stony look that Herbert remembered in the first hours of her grief came over her beautiful face.

'Why not come down in the May Week and see Harvard take his degree?' Herbert said innocently. 'He is sure to take a high place, he is such a splendid fellow!'

And then he, too, stopped abruptly. He had not told her that Harvard was in the fatal boat whose iron prow had spitted Geraint through the heart, but he remembered it at that moment, and groaned inwardly at having mentioned him to her.

She did not notice his silence, but went on talking of Brown and his affairs.

'I want to know all about him,' she said, 'and about his family; the poor old father you have told me about, who was so disappointed in him. I have a Bishop coming to luncheon to-day, and—and I may be able to do something for him.'

So Herbert told her all about Brown *patronus*, and the large family, and the small means, and the little vicarage-house, and tender-hearted Mrs. Brown, who was starving herself and pinching the housekeeping to keep her son at Cambridge. She listened patiently; doubtless she had heard the same story hundreds of times before, for every post brought her begging letters from impecunious members of every learned profession.

She didn't say much, but she sighed when he had finished, and luncheon being announced, she led the way silently into the dining-room.

If Herbert had been impressed by the wealth and luxury displayed in the simple morning-room, he was speechless and bewildered as he passed through the noble suite of reception-rooms to the dining-room where the luncheon was served.

He had read of such scenes as this, he had caught passing glimpses between the *portières* of Lady Millicent's drawing-room; but to tread a welcome guest amid such splendour made his foolish heart stand still. The thick pile of the carpets drowned the dreadful sound of his highlows (he wore iron tips to his heels for economy), and there were no mirrors on the walls or plate glass

panels to the doors, to reflect his frayed waistcoat and the baggy knees of his trousers. Mary Barclay hated looking-glasses; she was weary enough of herself without seeing herself reflected from every wall, and given back by every door, so every inch of plate-glass had been removed, except old-fashioned mirrors, that flattened, and broadened, and diminished anyone who was rash enough to look into them in a manner that was not conducive to personal vanity.

The looking-glasses had been replaced by priceless pictures, and the walls all round the lofty reception-rooms were hung with choice examples of old masters. The furniture was handsome and decorative, but it did not strike Herbert as being like anything he had ever seen before. There were whole suites of elaborately-carved furniture of Chippendale's best period, and cabinets that would have made a collector's mouth water, full of the rarest old china.

'This,' said Mary Barclay, stopping before a dainty cabinet, 'is my dear father's collection of Old English china.'

She pointed out to him as she spoke a suite of rare vases of old Worcester, with the deep-blue scale ground, and a set of old Chelsea figures of the seasons; and a cabinet full of shepherds and shepherdesses, with crooks, and sportive lambs, and garlands of flowers; and a perfect Olympus of heathen gods and goddesses: Neptunes with tridents, Junos with peacocks, Minervas, Mercurys, Dianas, Mars, Joves in brilliant array.

But Herbert had not eyes for any of these divinities; he had caught sight of a small mild-eyed Chelsea Cupid behind all these, and he tremblingly brought it forward and feasted his hungry eyes upon it.

'Ah,' said Mary Barclay, watching him with a swift sympathy in her eyes, 'you have seen that before?'

'Yes,' said Herbert huskily. He was thinking of the little mother and the bare best parlour of the cottage at Bideford. 'Yes, I know it quite well. I have never seen but one like it, on our mantelpiece at home. My mother valued it so much, dear little fellow! I knocked its head off when I was a child, and I remember her crying when she picked it up, and I cried too, and would not be comforted. I was so sorry for it.'

He had forgotten the magnificent room and the heiress by his side, and was back again in that bare cottage at Bideford—a child again, weeping with the little mother over the little broken Chelsea boy. The remembrance of those happy, innocent days, when they wept and rejoiced together, brought a mist before his eyes as he replaced the Cupid with a sigh.

Mary Barclay saw the gathering mist, but she did not hear the sigh.

'Your mother?' she repeated softly. 'Is she still living?'

'Yes,' he answered eagerly. 'Oh, yes, thank God!'

He followed her through the rest of the rooms in silence. He had

no eyes for the treasures of Sèvres and Dresden that were scattered about in profusion on the dainty Louis Seize tables and commodes. He had ceased to be bewildered by the magnificence around him. He had forgotten all about his noisy highlows and his shiny coat. He only remembered the little mother at Bideford. He only thought how a millionth portion of all this weary grandeur would bring peace and joy into her lean famished lot.

He was still thinking these vain, foolish thoughts as he entered the great gloomy dining-room where Mary Barclay was talking to some guests who had just arrived. She introduced Herbert to the great man who wore an apron in everyday life ; and by-and-by he was so preoccupied that he mistook the butler, who was a much more solemn and magnificent person, for the great and shining light of the English Church.

The table was loaded with silver, and there was gold plate on the sideboard, and the luncheon was served by a vast and voiceless army in hair-powder and silk stockings.

Herbert was very glad when the meal was over. He didn't enjoy it half so much as his college Hall, and the voiceless ones carried away his plate long before he had finished. The Bishop said a very short grace, and walked with Miss Barclay on the lawn after luncheon, and Herbert heard him making little clerical jokes the entire length of two greenhouses.

Just before the Bishop left, his hostess came over to Herbert, who was gazing helplessly at a great flowering, prickly aloe, in a conservatory full of tropical plants, and trying to summon up courage to go, and asked him for the address of Brown *patronus*. He had nothing but tradesmen's bills in his pocket to write it on, and he blushed dreadfully as he tore off a little corner of one—there was really no help for it—and wrote the familiar address.

He went away soon after the Bishop, but before he went Mary Barclay put the little Chelsea Cupid in his hands.

'Keep this,' she said, 'in remembrance of your visit. It will recall to you the little figure of your childhood that your mother wept over. I shall always love a Chelsea Cupid for her sake.'

He put the little figure on his bare mantelpiece when he got back to Trinity, and Jayne, when he told the tale, called it a trophy of his visit. But he didn't tell Jayne all, or half that he had seen. He had an uneasy sense that it would sound unreal and inflated, so that Jayne looked upon his visit, on the whole, as a failure. But to Brown he said nothing. It would have been cruel to excite the fervid imagination of this dreamer of dreams. Besides, his mind was already full of Barnwell. The night school was a great success, and several of the bigger boys, moved with admiration of the prowess of the temperance champion, whose doughty deed was still a favourite theme in Barnwell, came forward and signed the pledge.

Brown was so full of the work that he had ceased to hang about,

the Senate-house doors waiting for the lists. There were so many lists to be hung out now, fresh ones every morning, and again often at night, but the list of the men who had passed the Special and were eligible for the Poll degree had not yet appeared.

Brown gave a general look down the papers on the doors before he started on his evening work, a few nights after Herbert's fruitless visit, but the paper he looked for was not there.

When he came back some hours after there was quite a crowd round the gates of the Senate-house, which were closed for the night, and a man inside, who had climbed over the railings, was reading the list that had recently been put out, by the light of a match.

'What list is it?' Brown asked anxiously of a bystander.

'Oh, the Special.'

'Oh,' said Brown nervously, pressing his small round face through the bars in a wild endeavour to see twenty feet off in the dark; 'would you mind telling me, please, if a friend of mine, Brown of Trinity, is in the list?'

'Where is he likely to be?' asked the man inside, lighting another match.

'Oh, near the end.'

'No, he isn't here.' And Brown, with whitening face, turned silently away.

'Here, stop!' There was a hand on his shoulder, a not unfriendly undergraduate hand. 'Did you say Brown?'

'Yes, Brown of Trinity.'

'Oh, there's some mistake. I'm sure I heard it read out.'

The poor trembling fellow turns back, and with a white face pressed between the bars, asks the man inside very humbly if he has found the name of Brown.

'Yes; confound it!' answers the man, burning his fingers with the match. 'Why didn't you say where the fellow was likely to be, instead of dragging me through this confounded long list with a lucifer match?' Brown of Trinity is top of the second class. Oh, hang it!'

The match had burnt itself quite out, and the man's fingers too, and Brown of Trinity turned thankfully away from the gate of the Senate-house, with his heart bumping dreadfully, and a mist before his eyes that blurred all the gas-lamps in King's Parade.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A MILLION OF MONEY.

'An inner force had changed the blue
Of his old gown; from cap to shoe
Hung mantling folds of sable hue.
He tied his strings, like silk they show'd.
Through court and cloister, street and road,
A living bachelor he strode.'

MARY BARCLAY came down earlier than Herbert expected. She came down on the morning of the day when the prize poems were recited at the Senate-house. Herbert did not see her until he had ascended the rostrum, and was reciting the Greek ode for which he had been adjudged the Chancellor's gold medal.

Looking round at a pause in the rhythmic Greek, he saw the pale face of Mary Barclay in the crowd below. It was not the face he was looking for; that paler, gentler face, with a sad pity in the clear gray eyes that was almost cruel, was in the Doctor's Gallery beyond, and Mary Barclay came before it. He paused and blushed in his ridiculous way, and the men in the gallery shouted, 'Go on!' 'Don't be afraid!' 'Nobody's listening!' and other cheerful and encouraging remarks.

Herbert went on at a rapid pace for such a solemn measure, and stepped down from the rostrum amid a storm of applause from the well-filled galleries of the Senate-house. He hadn't bought a new coat this time, and the knees of his trousers looked baggier than ever as he went up alone through the long file of visitors, exposed to a double broadside of bright eyes criticising the classic poet on whom, for the second time, had descended the coveted bays of the University.

He need not have blushed so dreadfully as he came back, amid a delightful round of applause, bearing the Chancellor's gold medal; nobody was looking at his trousers. There was such an unaccountable mist before the eyes of the Trinity Lily that she couldn't have seen them if she were looking, and Mary Barclay was thinking of his mother.

She sent for him after the ceremony to the Bull Hotel, and asked him to take her to the fountain at King's.

She sent him back to his rooms to fetch his medal, which he had been too modest to bring, and she was delighted with it, and as proud over it, as if she had been—well—his sister.

'You will be a great man some day, Mr. Flowers; you are a great man, indeed, already. You have won the two most coveted distinctions in the University. A brilliant career lies before you. You will be a Fellow of Trinity!'

‘A Fellow of Trinity!’

Herbert kept repeating it to himself as he knelt a few hours later beside his distinguished visitor in the carved stalls of King’s Chapel. Success, distinction, a brilliant career! These words had never fallen on his ears before. He had plodded on without encouragement through all these months—years—without a friendly hand to help him on, without a friendly voice to whisper in his ear, ‘Well done!’ The soft voice of praise was a stranger to him, and its delicious murmur thrilled his veins with unutterable sweetness.

He was an exceptionally foolish and impressionable undergraduate.

Herbert had never sat in the stalls of King’s Chapel before. The discriminating verger does not put seedy-looking gowmsmen with frayed waistcoats into seats of honour. The music, always noble, sounded to him nobler, and the wonderful nave, with the awesome roof, had never struck him before with the sublimity of its aim—ill-matched as men are wont to call it, viewing the scanty band of white-robed scholars below.

The June sunshine streamed through the flaming robes of the prophets pictured on the panes of the wondrous painted windows of King’s, and through the deep azure of the skies, in which the men of old depicted the heaven they so intensely realized. The old Perpendicular blue of the storied windows flecked the marble floor of the chapel as they walked slowly out, with the notes of the noble organ swelling around them, and lingering on, as if loth to die, as they stood beside the fountain in the Great Court.

‘It was well done!’ said Mary Barclay, as she turned away from the scene of Geraint’s self-constituted vengeance; ‘it was nobly done!’

Herbert introduced Harvard to her, by her own request, and Jayne; but she did not want to see Mr. Brown yet. She gave them some coffee after Hall, in the sitting-room she had engaged at the Bull Hotel, and she waited upon them herself.

Harvard was full of fresh schemes for Barnwell, he had so much enthusiasm and vitality. The sparring-match hadn’t been a failure, after all. At least a dozen lads had come forward since, as a direct result of it, and enrolled themselves under the blue banner of the Good Templars.

He was only trying his ‘prentice hand here in Cambridge; he would take a larger field by-and-by—Americans always do take large fields—and convert a continent.

It seemed to Herbert that he could do anything he would, as he sat there at the open window of the Bull, looking out into the summer night, with his splendid enthusiasm, and eagerness, and strength for success and conquest. And Mary Barclay, with her quick sympathy, had brought it all to the front. Jayne was satisfied with Barnwell; but Harvard was already yearning for a larger field. She listened with a patient, abstracted air while

Jayne told her all his little plans ; but her face flushed and changed with the changes in his voice as Harvard poured out to her willing ears all his wider schemes.

She went to the Senate-house the next day to see him take his degree ; and she congratulated him, with a strange wistfulness in her eyes, when, 'armed with his dainty ribbon-tied degree,' he took his seat, amid the frantic cheering of his friends, upon the bench by her side.

Herbert, who was thinking of Geraint, whose place he filled, was looking down upon them from the overflowing gallery above, with a strange question in his heart : 'Was he right in bringing them together ?'

Brown did not take his degree till the day after the honours men. He took it with the Hoi Polloi. He was thankful enough to take it in any company. He had a dreadful dream the night before the degrees were conferred, and he came over to Herbert's room, with a look of dismay on his simple old face, before chapel, to ask him whether he believed in dreams.

He had dreamed that the Vice-Chancellor, and the Esquire Bedell—with the silver mace packed in a despatch-box—and the Proctors, had been summoned hastily to confer degrees at a university in Central Africa.

But when the auspicious moment arrived, and Brown, in a white fur bachelor's hood, and two innocent little white bands, tremblingly ascended the Senate-house steps, the Vice-Chancellor was already there—and the Esquire Bedell was there—and the silver mace was there—and the Senior Proctor was there, with a twinkle in his eye, as if he thought he had seen Brown before.

And somebody else was there. Not Maria. Oh no ; not Maria ! Brown's father was there, and Mrs. Brown, and Brown's sisters, rounder, and plumper, and ever so much more interesting than Brown. At least Cudworth said so, and he ought to be an authority, as he had already taken them through all the colleges, and over all the bridges, and inside all the churches in Cambridge, that very morning.

Brown's father said it was the happiest day of his life. And he looked like it, with that expression of supreme pride and happiness on his worn face, when his son knelt down before the Vice-Chancellor. No doubt Mrs. Brown's countenance would have expressed the same satisfaction, but it was buried in her pocket-handkerchief, and she never saw what she had travelled a hundred miles to see—she only saw a moving rainbow, in which the scarlet of the Vice-Chancellor's gown and the white fur of Brown's hood were the prevailing hues, and swam before her in an undignified Catherine wheel.

Mary Barclay's eyes were wet with tears as she saw the simple fellow, whom everybody greeted with a genuine warmth with

which they had not greeted better men, take his place on the bench beside his happy people.

Happy people indeed !

For only that morning the offer had reached Brown *patronus*, from a Bishop who had suddenly discovered his merits, of a rich living in the fat and flourishing Midlands, and his old friends and college chums were crowding round him, as he came through the gate of Trinity, to congratulate him on this preferment.

He remembered how he had passed beneath that gate, not so long ago, with not a friendly hand to clasp, not a friendly voice to cheer him, and how the men who were crowding round him now had passed by on the other side of the quad.

It is quite true : nothing succeeds like success !

Everybody had heard of it by some means, and Cudworth, coming up the stairs brimful of it, pitched his cap over a ridiculous Japanese screen that Brown had put in front of his door, as he kept it open during the hot weather for ventilation, about the place that Brown usually sat, with a delightful variation of the old refrain :

‘ Oh, Kicklebury Brown ! oh, Kicklebury Brown !
What a lucky old man you are !’

But it wasn’t lucky for Cudworth ; for the chair had been moved that Brown usually occupied, and a table, with all the cups and saucers he could borrow on the staircase, stood in its place, and his cap flopped down in the middle of them.

He had to go in and get it, but, oh, it was such a happy day ! He picked up the pieces and he stayed to tea.

Mary Barclay went as she came ; she had been an unseen witness of the happiness of these simple people, and she returned to town strangely softened by her visit.

The men were all going down, and the chapels were over, and the courts deserted, and Herbert was only waiting up for a remittance from the little mother to take him down too. Spurway had gone down days before. He had gone over to Herbert’s rooms on the last morning, and had begged him, if he were going down to Bideford, to say nothing about that affair with Julie.

It was all over now, and he was heartily sorry for it. She had led him on to it—it is always the woman’s fault—or he should never have got into such a scrape—she and Grinley. Grinley had backed her up, and made him do a great many foolish things. He would tell Herbert all about it some day ; meanwhile, he begged him not to betray him, not to say anything about his folly to the people at home.

Herbert promised. He was always getting himself mixed up with other people’s secrets.

On the Sunday morning he received the little mother’s letter, enclosing a post-office order for the amount of his fare down to

Bideford. He was musing on that last quiet Sunday night, when the hush of the vacation had already settled upon Cambridge, as he passed through the Great Court, and out beneath the ancient gate, on Mary Barclay's words, 'A Fellow of Trinity.'

His dreams had been wide enough, and soared high enough; but they had never embraced this possibility, and the words still rang in his ears with a strange persistence. He had planned many things; among them, as the ulterior fruit of a good degree, the head-mastership of the old Grammar School at Bideford. But a Fellow of Trinity—this had not entered into his wildest dreams. He looked up with quite a new feeling at the old gray buildings, and the mullioned windows, that the sun was shining upon and glorifying, of the comfortable Fellows' room. He realized, with a sudden awed consciousness, the possibilities the future held for him, when the dark curtain of uncertainty and poverty should be lifted, and a gentle scholarly life should open out before him amid all these dear and venerable surroundings.

There was a purblind old Fellow crossing the court now—a grave, dignified, courtly old Fellow, a very distinguished scholar in his time, but now a feeble old man—noble still to look upon, with a fringe of white hair beneath his tasselled scholar's cap resting on his rusty silk gown. Herbert had a sudden interest in him, and stepped forward and helped him over the step of the postern. He lifted his cap with a smile of pleased surprise as he passed beneath the gate, and Herbert paused and looked after him.

How much had he gained, and how much had he missed, in this lonely, peaceful life! Herbert was still asking this question as he passed through Trinity Street and across the market-place; and a mist rose before his eyes as he repeated softly to himself Mary Barclay's words: 'A Fellow of Trinity!'

'A—Fel—low—of—Trin—ity!'

The church-bells were ringing all over Cambridge for the evening service, and they broke upon his ear with a sudden clash and a clang; and the ridiculous old bells of St. Edward's were shouting after him across the market-place:

'A—Fel—low—of—Trin—ity!'

There could be no mistake about it; the magic syllables were rising and falling regularly with the rhythmical beat of the bells:

'A—Fel—low—of—Trin—ity!'

The foolish undergraduate blushed consciously, for he thought everybody must hear it. Perhaps they did, but the bells had a different voice for them.

They were telling a different story no doubt to every ear. To some:

'A—nice—fat—Bish—op—ric!'

'A—seat—on—the—Wool—sack!'

And so on *ad libitum*, varying their tale for every listening ear. They told a different tale to us when we were young. They will

tell a different story when we are gone, and our children will listen eagerly to their sweet promises over again.

God bless them for their kindly voices if they make any of us nobler and braver, and lift us up when we are weary and cast down ; if they sound in disappointed lives to some brother forlorn and shipwrecked, who, hearing them, will gird his armour on afresh, and tremblingly take heart again !

It was towards the close of a lovely blue June day that Herbert went down to his old home at Bideford. The beauty of the day and the loveliness of this new green, hilly West-Country had been growing upon him all the way, ever since he left the weary flats and fenlands of Cambridge. As he looked out of the window of the third-class railway carriage upon the dear familiar scenes, upon all the loveliness that had surrounded him in his childhood, he thought how little everything had changed. The rich abundant summer foliage and wealth of blossom were on the trees and the hedgerows, and the grass in the meadows, and the sweet summer scents filled all the air, and they all with one accord and one voice welcomed him back.

There was no change here in these kind dumb voices ; and the old familiar elm-trees by the road whispered to him as he walked up alone from the station, in the same low, hushed whisper that he remembered in his childhood, and waved their arms aloft in the old familiar way. The rooks were cawing in them now, and looking out over the sides of the same old nests he had always remembered.

Under the sweet green elms he came up to the cottage. It was no longer poor or mean in his eyes, for he saw things clearer now. A woodbine draped the porch, and a climbing rose-tree grew all over the front and peeped in at the windows ; and yellow stone-worts were blossoming all over the thatch ; and from the little green garden rose the delightful smell of the dear homely flowers he had known and loved all his life.

No one had come to the station to meet him, for he had given no notice of his coming.

But the little mother was awaiting him, and the best parlour was prepared for him, and there were white curtains fluttering in the window, and flowers on the table, and all his prize-books dusted on the shelf, looking at him like old friends.

The little mother was unchanged. She was lovelier than ever, he thought, but more fragile. She was such a little creature when he took her in his strong arms ! She wept to see him, but she hid her tears bravely, and busied herself to prepare a more substantial welcome for him.

When he went up to his own old little room beneath the eaves, a mist came before his eyes as he humbly thanked God for the tender love that was still spared him. Everything in the familiar room was unchanged, but the carpet was more worn than he remembered it beside his bed. It was not worn by his knees.

There were guests staying at the great house across the Torridge, and Herbert met them the next morning as he was strolling along a country road revisiting the familiar haunts of his youth. He was strolling leisurely along through a sweet dusky lane, where the branches met overhead, lingering over every familiar landmark, when the sound of voices disturbed him, and, looking up, he saw only a few paces from him, and advancing towards him, the figures of two girls—Muriel Spurway and Lilian Howell.

The Trinity Lily, lovelier, fresher, and more lily-like than ever, paused in her walk as if she would have stopped, and Herbert raised his hat and stood aside for her to pass. Before she could return his greeting or recover from her surprise, her companion had drawn her hastily away, and left Herbert standing cold and discomfited in the middle of the road.

What had he done he asked himself bitterly to merit this rebuff?

It could not be his poverty; he knew Lilian Howell too well to attribute for a moment such an unworthy motive. He remembered all too well those earlier days after his accident, when he had told her all about his poverty and the little mother, and how her eyes, those clear gray eyes that looked at him now so coldly, had brightened, and her cheek had flushed at the touching story of Lucy's sacrifices for her boy. He recalled, too, the change that had come over her, when the truthful eyes looked sorry and disappointed in him. Their cold reproof had haunted him with a dull sense of injustice, but now it cut him to the quick.

He asked himself a thousand times what he had done, in that miserable morning walk. He asked the same question again the next day, when he met Lady Millicent and bluff Sir Hugh driving through the town, and they ignored his bow, and cut him dead in the face of all the lynx-eyed shopkeepers in High Street.

He blushed dreadfully. He could have cried with mortification. He was hurt beyond measure.

What had he done?

He hadn't any appetite at dinner, and fond, anxious Lucy proposed the dinner-time should be altered, as he was unaccustomed to these plebeian hours.

He never told her anything about the rebuffs he had received, the mortification he had endured. She saw he was suffering, but she never guessed the cause. Had he confided in this kind counsellor what misery he might have been spared!

What youths, indeed, do confide to their anxious parents the stormy passions that consume them—when Phyllis is shy, or fickle, or cold, or turns up her little dainty nose, and looks the other way when Strephon happens to meet her?

The poor boy bore his mortification in silence. He walked in unfrequented roads; he avoided the woods and hills that lay round Bratton. He wandered away, like he used to do years ago,

to the seashore, or roamed amid the sandy desolation of Northam. He made himself as miserable as he could; but he never complained. He could bear the coldness and discourtesy of the people at the great house; he was accustomed to receive the cold shoulder from the landed gentry of Bideford; they had never, at any time in his life, shown him any cordiality or encouragement. But he could not understand the changed manner of Lihan Howell, and he chafed unreasonably under the injustice of it. Surely the Spurways, whose guest she was, were influencing her, were prejudicing her against him. She never looked his way now if he met her by any chance in his walks. He bowed gravely when he met her, but he never raised his eyes to hers after that first morning.

He met her riding with Spurway once, and, the road being narrow, stood in the hedge, flattening himself among the brambles while they passed; but Spurway didn't see him either, or acknowledge his salute, only bespattered him with mud from his horse's heels, and, no doubt, liberally confounded the beggar's impudence.

There were a number of guests staying at the great house, and lawn-tennis parties every day, and picnics, and boating, and golfing on the links at Westward Ho; but never an invitation came to Herbert to join them.

He had not been home a week before he realized the divine truth that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. He wasn't exactly a prophet, but he had won already the highest distinction that the University has to confer, and—and—he acknowledged this with bated breath—he might be, by-and-by, a Fellow of Trinity!

Nobody in Bideford gauged his success. His coat was shiny at the seams, and his trousers uncommonly baggy at the knees. They didn't understand that kind of success.

When Herbert had been 'down' a fortnight, he had had quite enough of it. He wrote to his tutor, and asked if his scholarship would enable him to keep the summer term.

Mr. Routh wrote back, kindly and cordially, and offered to make up any deficiency that it would not cover; and, in addition, offered to coach him throughout the term without any remuneration whatever.

Herbert packed up his shabby portmanteau, and kissed the little mother, and went back to Cambridge the next day. As he had hailed the dear familiar landmarks 'going down,' so he hailed them coming up; and when from the golden vapours of the July sunset the spires and towers of Cambridge came solemnly out of the summer night and its shadows to meet him, he felt indeed that the promise of the bells, which struck upon his ears as he steamed into the station, was bringing about its own fulfilment.

CHAPTER XXX.

PISTOLS FOR TWO.

‘The fault was mine; the fault was mine!’

HERBERT worked hard during the long vacation. Work is a specific for many things—for grief, disappointment, broken hearts. Hard-working men never die of any of these diseases.

Herbert was not at all likely to die of any of them; he was much more likely to kill himself with his work. He charged at it now more furiously than ever. It meant so many things to him—at least, the possible results did.

Success, with its euphonious repetition of consonants, spelt so many other things beside—things that his heart hungered for—honour, distinction, fame, an assured position, relief from the galling chain of poverty, and, maybe, love.

But it meant, above all, lifting the little mother out of her low estate into the position she was so fitted to adorn; it meant repaying her, in one proud moment, for all the privations and sacrifices she had so willingly endured through all these years.

He had settled in his mind that first night, as he lay tossing in his bed in his narrow college chamber, looking out at the square patch of blue sky visible above the Great Court, that there were two principal things he had to work for—the little mother and the love of Lilian Howell.

He had set this before himself long ago. It had been a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night, through all his University career. He could afford to wait; he could afford to be misunderstood until that goal was reached that he was panting for. He had only to work—and ‘wait a minute!’

At least, he told himself so; and he did the first part of his self-allotted task with a courage and determination that could have but one result through the breathless, sultry summer days.

On the first day of the October term he saw Lilian Howell in her accustomed seat at chapel. He had not seen her since that memorable day at Bideford; and, strangely enough, the sight of her sitting there in her white gown brought back to him, across confessions, and beliefs, and rhythmic Psalms, not the narrow Devonshire lane, and the slight that had been put upon him, nor the mud that had bespattered him—it brought back none of these disturbing visions; it only brought before his eyes the face of the little mother—a strange, sweet suggestiveness that ever after hung about the pure presence of the Trinity Lily.

She never looked at him through all the service, though his eyes

and his thoughts were always intent on her, and she avoided him now, for the first time, in the quad.

Herbert understood the reason better when he read a letter from the little mother that awaited him on his breakfast-table when he came in from chapel.

It told him the latest piece of news at Bideford. The heir of the great house was engaged to marry Lilian Howell.

Lilian Howell !

A mist swam before his eyes, and for a moment familiar objects were in unaccustomed places. He did not stay to think ; he did not stay to throw off his surplice which he had worn at chapel, but with his face a shade paler than the spotless linen (it had just returned from the college laundress), he strode across the court with the open letter in his hand.

Jayne, who had come up to read for orders, and was wearing with much humility his B.A. hood, tried to stop him at the foot of the staircase ; but he brushed by him unheeding, with a face as stern and inflexible as Fate.

He passed through the cloisters into Neville's Court and up an unfamiliar staircase. He paused before a door over which was inscribed in white letters the name of 'Spurway.'

He knocked at the door with a peremptory rap that was unusual in Neville's Court. The door was opened by Spurway's scout, and Spurway himself was sitting at breakfast with a party of friends. They were strangers to Herbert, and they glanced up at him superciliously, standing there in his surplice, with an open letter in his hand, and his white, stricken face.

Spurway looked up nervously at his uninvited guest, and glanced with a whitening face at the open letter in his hand.

He had no need to demand of his visitor, 'Oh, come ye in peace, or come ye in war?' He had no need to ask the messenger of Fate who had broken in upon the feast and stood in their midst, 'Unto which of all of us is thy message?'

He tried to ask him to have some breakfast, but his voice trembled in spite of himself. He did like the giver of the interrupted feast of old : he excused himself to his guests and took Herbert into an inner room.

Herbert laid the open letter before him, pointing with an inflexible finger to the terrible line.

'Is this true?' he inquired hoarsely.

'I don't know that I am bound to answer such an—an impertinent question,' said Spurway loftily.

'You will answer this,' Herbert said very quietly, but with a strange fire blazing up in his eyes.

'Well,' said the other with an assumption of indifference, 'it must be known sooner or later. I don't know that it really matters. It is quite true.'

'And Julie?' Herbert asked.

His voice was so hoarse that he scarcely recognised it for his own.

'Oh, that is my business. That has nothing to do with your question.'

'It has everything to do with it!' said Herbert, speaking calmly with a great effort.

'Oh, I forgot; she was an old flame of yours, and you are interested in the *dénouement*. I have pensioned her off. She will have a *dot*. If you are still smitten, I shall be happy to arrange things satisfactorily. She shall have a very handsome *dot*.'

Herbert didn't knock him down, and he didn't shoot him with one of his own pistols which hung temptingly against the wall, and he didn't throw him out of the window, which happened to be open, into the middle of Neville's Court, though there were many men in Trinity who would have justified all or any of these summary proceedings.

He didn't relieve his feelings in any way, but his white face flushed scarlet, and the smouldering devil in his eyes leapt into a flame.

'You shall give me satisfaction for this!' said Herbert, in his most magnificent manner; and he strode out of the room, and past the assembled guests with his face aflame, and the little mother's letter crumpled up in his hand.

When Spurway's guests, who had got a little impatient of the delay—and the fish and the dainty meats had grown cold while he was away—inquired of him the errand of this mad fellow, he cursed 'the beggar's impudence' in no measured terms, but he didn't tell them his errand.

Herbert did a thing at Hall on that eventful day that he had never done before in the course of his residence at Trinity—he called for wine.

He chose a moment of comparative silence to make this unusual request.

Generally there is so much conversation going on at Hall that the evil brings its own remedy, and drowns itself in a universal hum. To this succeeds at rare intervals a dead silence. It was in one of these pauses that Herbert called in a stentorian voice for 'wine.'

Everybody looked round, and the waiter, whose business it was to attend the scholars' table, paused in astonishment with a dish in mid-air when he saw from whom the call proceeded. Jayne looked up with a sudden terror in his face, and Cudworth paused with a dainty morsel on his fork, and looked over to the scholars' table.

The wine was brought—not a dainty trifle of a glass on a slender stem, but a college bumper.

Herbert rose from the table with the glass in his hand, and everyone looked up thinking he was going to propose a toast. The

momentary lull was over, and the hum of many voices was as loud as ever.

Herbert did not propose a toast ; his face was perfectly white and unnaturally calm, and he walked quietly over to the gentlemen commoners' table, where Spurway sat among his friends, and coolly and deliberately threw the glass of wine across the dinner-table in his face.

Had a mine exploded beneath their feet there could not have been greater consternation than ensued at the table at which the gentlemen commoners sat at meat. They rose to their feet to a man, except, indeed, Spurway, who was streaming from every pore with claret. The aim had been excellent, and every drop of the precious liquid had taken effect. It was running out of his eyes ; it was pouring from his hair ; it was dripping off the tip of his nose ; it was oozing out of the corners of his mouth ; it was trickling from his ears ; and the white bosom of his shirt and the collar of his coat got the full benefit of the shower.

He looked up as soon as he could, panting and glaring like a furious Bacchus at Herbert, who stood coolly on the other side of the table with the empty glass still in his hand.

'You threw this at me?' he roared : no, he didn't exactly roar ; he inquired—not meekly, but by no means loudly.

'Yes,' said Herbert quietly ; 'I threw it ; you all hear me?' and he looked round at the excited faces gathered round the board, 'and you have your remedy.'

He walked quietly back to his seat and placed the empty glass upon the table, and, with his great stride and his lofty bearing, like a prince in disguise, instead of a poor beggar or a scholar from a country grammar school, he left the hall.

Jayne limped after him, and Cudworth realized the truth of the old adage, 'There's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip,' as the dainty morsel on his halting fork never reached its destination.

Herbert sat and waited in his rooms after Hall for a message from Spurway ; for a message that should come quickly—a message that *must* come, surely. He waited in vain.

The white heat of his rage had cooled, and he could look at the situation with calmer eyes. Of course he must fight now if Spurway challenged him. The days of duelling we all know are over, but gentlemen have to settle their little differences.

Herbert did not say a word as to the cause of the quarrel to either of his friends who sat and waited beside him through that dreary October night.

When he was quite tired of waiting and speculating he went to bed. He lay tossing through all that weary night with the face of the little mother haunting him—such a pale, sad face, and the dear eyes were full of reproaches. What business had he, he asked himself, when Reason, with the gray morning light, came back to her throne, to be fighting the battles of foolish little nursery

governesses who will burn their wings in the first candle they come to? A pretty story it would be on Scandal's nimble tongue to go back to Bideford, that he had constituted himself the champion of Julie's wrongs—Julie, the little painted Jezebel, who had been ordered out of Trinity and warned off the streets of Cambridge, and stood in daily peril of the Spinning House.

He blushed between the sheets when he thought of his folly. He remembered the cruel stories he had heard and read of hasty words and foolish brawls overnight, and bloody meetings at dawn, of lifelong remorse, and wasted lives, and hearths made desolate, and innocent hearts broken. It was this last reflection moved him more than all. What sorrow was he in his folly and madness about to bring upon those he was bound to by the dearest ties!

He got up directly it was light and wrote a letter to Harvard, and begged him to come to him at once. His bedmaker's chronic sniff was never more welcome than on this chill October morning, and he lighted his own fire while she found a messenger to carry the letter to Emmanuel without delay.

Jack Harvard was back before the messenger. He had come up to read for another Tripes.

'When I've got a double-first I'll pack up my duds and look out for an A1 fast-sailing *Mayflower*,' he explained when his friends asked him why he had come up this term.

'Well,' he said as he came bouncing into Herbert's room. He had climbed the stairs two steps at a time, and the impetus thus gained landed him against Herbert's door with a shock that might attend the unexpected delivery of a sack of coals.

'Well!' responded Herbert gloomily.

'So you've got yourself into a fix?' this was said admiringly rather than disparagingly.

'Yes,' said Herbert, encouraged by the tone; 'how did you hear of it?'

'Oh, everybody's heard of it; it's all over Cambridge.'

This was not at all reassuring, neither was the unwonted gleam of interest in the watery eyes of Herbert's bedmaker, who was fidgeting about the room in a most provoking manner. Was she, with a prevision of coming events, taking a last look at him, and appraising the value of his wardrobe in the same watery glance?

Herbert despatched her to the college kitchen to fetch him some fish, and shut his oak after her.

'Well, old man,' said Harvard, regarding him with manifest approval as he lolled against the opposite wall; 'so you spiled his linen. What's the weppins?'

Herbert explained that at present there were no weapons in the case.

'Hasn't he sent to you yet?'

Herbert shook his head gloomily. He was stirring that wretched

fire that flatly refused to burn, and his back was towards his friend.

'By Jove! where's the fellow's pluck? You English are cool ones! If it had happened in the States, it would have been all over before daylight, and one of you beggars would have had a bullet through his heart.'

'Yes,' said Herbert absently, and the scene rose between him and the spluttering fire. The cold, gray morning and the two men—who had been friends in youth—the measured paces, the deadly weapons raised, the sudden flash, a white face on the grass, and a conscience-stricken man kneeling beside it, and wildly striving to stem the fast-ebbing tide, to call back the fleeting breath—a lifelong remorse—a ruined life!

It all passed before him in a moment, as the flame suddenly shot up the chimney and the wood crackled fiercely and went out.

'You don't think he'll take any step in the matter?' Harvard said presently.

'I don't think he can help it. He must, I think, or go down. Everybody would cut him.'

'Won't he appeal to the Dean?'

'No,' said Herbert quietly; 'I don't think he'll do that.'

'Nor his tutor?'

'No; he has his own reasons for not making a fuss about it.'

'Oh, I see. I don't want you to tell me more than you care to about the provocation you had received before taking—er—such an extreme measure; but I beg your pardon if I am wrong: I presume there is a woman in it?'

'Yes,' said Herbert quietly, 'there's a lady in it.'

He was thinking of Lilian Howell. He had forgotten all about Julie and her wrongs.

Harvard gave a prolonged whistle, and looked keenly at Herbert, who blushed guiltily.

'Just as I expected,' he said laconically; 'there is always a woman in it! He has cut you out, I presume. I beg your pardon again if I am wrong.'

Herbert blushed redder than ever. This cruel thrust of Harvard's, keen as a two-edged sword, revealed to him what he had never suspected until now, the *real* provocation of his most unwarrantable act. He groaned aloud, and covered his face with his hands.

Lilian Howell had a perfect right to choose between them, and she had chosen Spurway. What woman in her senses wouldn't?

The chapel bell was clanging out its last invitation, and the men were flying across the quad. Harvard looked across the table to him.

'Suppose you go to chapel,' he said; 'and I will stay here, and think it out.'

Herbert got into his surplice as he was flying across the court,

and the bell stopped, and he only got into the chapel in time by the skin of his teeth.

Everybody looked up as he passed to his seat among the third-year men, and his highlows made a dreadful clatter on the marble floor.

The Dean's voice was reading the General Confession when Herbert recovered himself sufficiently to listen to anything. It seemed to him, in his highly-strung condition, that he had never heard it before. In whatever limited sense a Dean may, by way of example, regard himself as a miserable sinner, Herbert never felt more like one in his life than when he fell down upon his knees on the hard floor and confessed the murder there was in his heart.

It all came before him again, as he knelt there with the brand of Cain already upon his brow. The vision that Harvard's words had conjured up, and scenes in his own past life, rose before him like pictures in a moving kaleidoscope. He was a boy again in the grounds of Bratton, and Spurway and he were playing together; he was back again in his old schoolroom, and the faces of his old schoolfellows were piled one above the other in a moving mass, and his own name was being shouted by a hundred voices that he knew so well, and he saw the bluff, kind face of old Sir Hugh beam upon him as he shook him by the hand in his hearty way, and congratulated him on his success; and as he moved down the hall, amid that sea of well-remembered faces, and the flutter of a white handkerchief in the corner, that he knew instinctively belonged to the little mother, Spurway's sister put out her cordial hand, and gave him a red rose—how he blushed at the memory of it!—and Lady Millicent extended two dainty fingers. She need not have given him any.

And now, in return for all this confidence, upon all these happy memories, he was about to—to—— He didn't finish the sentence, for the Confession was over, and the Absolution too, and he was standing up, white-robed, and penitent, and singing the Psalm for the day: 'Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle, or, who shall rest upon Thy holy hill?'

In this calm light the rash act of over-night was no longer heroic. It was a selfish and headstrong piece of folly. He only glanced over once to where the Trinity Lily sat; he dared not meet those clear gray eyes. He did not see her face even then across the gloom of the chapel. He saw instead the face of the little mother.

When the service was over, and he got back to his rooms, Harvard was still there, but the fire was quite out.

A letter addressed to him in Spurway's hand was on the table. He flushed all over when he saw it, but he didn't take it up.

'It came directly you went out,' said Harvard, nodding over to it.

Herbert sat down in his accustomed Windsor chair before the cheerless hearth, but he didn't attempt to take up the letter.

'Why don't you open it?' said Harvard impatiently.

'It's all over,' said Herbert quietly; 'I'm not going to fight.'

'Not fight! What are you going to do, then?' exclaimed Harvard.

'I'm going to apologize,' Herbert answered very quietly. 'I'm going to apologize publicly. The insult was public, and the apology must be public.'

'Old man,' said Harvard, rising from his seat and coming over to Herbert with his great hand outstretched, and his blue eyes glistening, 'you're a brick! I'm proud to call you my friend!'

Herbert took his hand and pressed it silently. A woman wouldn't have cared for such a pressure, especially if she wore rings. Herbert didn't wear rings; he hadn't one, indeed, to wear, and he looked up with a look of grateful relief into Harvard's face.

'You think I'm doing right?' he said humbly.

'I don't think anything about it. You could do no other as—as a Christian. It would have been—well, different—when your blood was up; but to meet a fellow now, after all this time, and shoot him in cold blood—it would have been nothing short of murder. Some men might call it honour; I should call it deliberate murder.'

Herbert went to his writing-table; he was trembling all over, and his hand shook so he could hardly hold the pen. Nothing had ever affected him so in his life. He wrote a very contrite letter, couched in the humblest terms, with a manly confession of his fault, and offering the amplest public apology.

After he had finished this courageous epistle, he had the further courage to show it to Harvard, who read it through without a word; but there was an unusual mist before his eyes as he laid it down on Herbert's desk.

'If you've no objection,' he said, 'I'll deliver that letter myself. I've never been any man's second yet, but I'm proud to be yours.'

Herbert folded up the paper, enclosing with it Spurway's letter, with the seal unbroken. Whatever its contents might be he never knew; he never wished to know. He had only just discovered that the truest honour was a manly confession of wrong—that the truest courage was to refuse the meeting he had so recklessly sought.

Harvard did not return, and Herbert sat alone at his miserable breakfast-table. The fire was quite out, and he had a strange reluctance to relight it. He had not sat there half an hour, it seemed to him, but really a few minutes, before the door opened, and Spurway came in.

He had not heard him knock, and he did not look up until he was standing opposite to him by the desolate hearth.

His face was white and grave, and in the sober morning light it

looked manly and handsome. He held out his hand to Herbert there was a diamond ring on his finger, and gold links to his spotless cuffs, and his hands were shapely and white.

'Forgive me, Flowers,' he said, with a catch in his voice. 'I am in the wrong, not you; you served me right!'

Herbert could not believe his ears.

'No,' he said gloomily, 'the fault was mine. I am very sorry. I am willing to make a public apology, if—if you can forgive me.'

'I have nothing to forgive,' said the other, with a tremor about his full underlip that Herbert had never seen before. 'I deserved all I got. I forgot you were a gentleman; Flowers, I behaved shamefully. I am very sorry; will you forgive me?' and again he held out his hand.

'Do you mean it?' said Herbert huskily.

'Of course I mean it, if—if you are not too proud to take it.'

Herbert hadn't at all a fair hand, and it was stained with ink, and he had no ring on his finger, and no cuff on his wrist, but he reached out the warm, manly hand of forgiveness and friendship across the desolate hearth, and Tom Spurway shook it heartily.

'I say, Flowers, you know,' he said awkwardly, 'there isn't any need of an apology now—not the least. I only got what I deserved, and I'm not ashamed to own it. Let it drop!'

But Herbert did not let it drop. That night after Hall, taking advantage of a momentary lull, he rose from his seat and crossed to where Spurway was sitting. Spurway knew what was coming, and he rose from his seat, and waved him back. But Herbert was not so easily silenced. Standing where he stood the previous night, and looking round upon the upturned faces of the men of his own standing, he said quietly, but in a loud voice that all at the table might hear:

'I did a most cowardly and unwarrantable act last night, unworthy of a member of this University; and I desire now to offer a most humble apology for it, not only to Mr. Spurway, but to all the members of the University who sit at this table with him.'

There was a general murmur of applause, and Spurway, with his eyes shining as he looked round upon his friends, exclaimed in an agitated voice:

'No, no, no; the fault was mine! Do you all hear? The fault was mine. Gad, he served me right!'

CHAPTER XXXI.

A BENEFICENT FAIRY.

'Loaf, as I have loafed aforetime, through the streets with tranquil mind,
And a long-backed fancy mongrel trailing casually behind.'

THERE was nothing more said about it. Both men had acted honourably ; and by common consent the subject was never again referred to publicly.

Herbert's boots were quite as coarse as ever, and his coat was a trifle more frayed ; but Spurway walked the whole length of King's Parade with his arm in his, on the first fine sunshiny afternoon after this event.

Their afternoon walk did not end with King's Parade, but continued through the whole length of Trumpington Street, and through the villages of Trumpington and Grantchester, or what is familiarly known as the Grantchester Grind.

It is a grind peculiarly favourable to conversation ; the landscape offers few distractions to a poetic temperament. On this particular grind, and in this and other walks, Spurway confided to Herbert the story of his miserable entanglement with his mother's protégée.

It was a very old story—a story ever told anew with shame and humiliation. Of course the woman was in the wrong.

She had led him on ; and—and he had promised to marry her. He had confided his embarrassment to Grinley, who at that time was his friend and Mentor, and he had obligingly found a man who was willing to play the part of parson. Julie—innocent, confiding Julie—had followed him to Cambridge, and there, in Grinley's rooms, with the aid of a college surplice and a B.A. hood, the sham marriage had taken place.

It was not the first time such things had happened in Cambridge.

'And she never asked about the license ?' asked Herbert moodily, dropping Spurway's arm, and placing the width of the footpath between them.

'Oh no ; she was quite satisfied.'

Quite satisfied ! Poor, credulous, simple Julie !

After this confession Herbert found it necessary to devote himself more closely than ever to his work. He sported his oak through all the bright winter afternoons, and took his solitary grind in the damp misty mornings before Spurway was out of bed.

Of Julie he saw nothing during the remainder of the term. The dog-cart, the bull-dog, and the tiger were seen no longer in the streets of Cambridge. Spurway had told him incidentally that he

had quite severed all connection with her, and allowed her, through a mutual friend—he didn't say who, but Herbert gathered that Mr. Grinley occupied that disinterested position—a certain sum, conditional on her not appearing at Cambridge.

She had observed the condition so far, and her bright eyes, and her ravishing toilets, and her tinted complexion and bewildering fringe, were seen no more in the haunts of (University) men.

But in all these uninvited confidences there had been no mention of Lilian Howell. Herbert dared not trust himself to speak of her, and after that first admission Spurway's lips were sealed. Some day, Herbert told himself, some day before it was too late, he would urge upon him, by everything he held sacred, to make a free and full confession of his guilt to the trusting girl who was about to be his wife—to tell her all, make a clean breast of it, and throw himself upon her generosity. She must know it some day; better hear it from his lips than from strangers.

But Herbert had not spoken yet. He watched, with dreary eyes and bitter, unreasoning impatience, the happy accepted suitor, in the latest productions of a Bond Street tailor, make his afternoon calls at the Lodge. He had a fine view of the entrance from his window, and he knew to a minute how long he stayed; and he followed him in imagination through the oak-panelled hall, and up the wide staircase, with the old divines looking gravely down upon him, into the stately drawing-room, and—and—— Here his imagination failed him, and he turned from the contemplation of his rival's bliss with a groan.

He would usually relapse into blank verse, and other convenient mediums of poetic expression, after noting these visits of Spurway to the Lodge. He improved the occasions. His wounded feelings found a balm in Latin hexameters. His sentiments at this period of his University career, indeed, were quite a mine of wealth to him. He turned them in different metres into various languages with great comfort and satisfaction.

His emotions were a perennial spring, from which he filtered out elegant Latin verses and the most graceful Greek odes that had been written in Trinity for several decades.

He sometimes met Lilian Howell in the grounds leading about the old Master—a sad, broken-down old man, whose life had been desolated by his bereavement. He was always glad to see Herbert. He reminded him of her he had lost, and he could talk to him about his sorrow, and be sure of a quick and ready sympathy.

Lilian Howell would greet him coldly on these occasions; she never by any chance gave him her hand, and would seize an early opportunity to slip away and leave him alone with the old Master.

Once Herbert met her walking with Spurway in the lime-tree avenue; it was not long after the episode related in the last chapter. The heat of Spurway's new-born contrition had not had time to cool, and he stopped and spoke to Herbert, and, turning to

his companion, with a faltering lip he said, awkwardly enough, and with a sudden terror in his eyes :

‘I—I think you know Mr. Flowers, Lilian?’

‘Yes,’ she answered coldly, and with averted eyes ; ‘I have met Mr. Flowers before.’

She bowed gravely and passed on, and left Herbert standing in the path beneath the limes, and the rooks cawing mockingly overhead.

‘He need not have been afraid that I should betray him,’ said Herbert bitterly as he took the opposite path ; ‘he could surely trust me. But, oh, what have I done, that she should look so coldly?’

It was not mere indifference ; he could have borne that. It was rebuke—hard, stony rebuke and disapproval, he read in her clear gray eyes. They had not always looked so. He remembered the time when they were soft and yielding, and drooped before his ardent gaze as if—— Ah, that was all over now, and they had long since ceased to droop !

About this time he received a letter from Mary Barclay, asking him to come and see her. He went. He had nothing much to do just then, and he yearned for female sympathy. He wasn’t a bit afraid now of the magnificent Jeames who aired his fine figure and his gorgeous livery against the pillars of Mary Barclay’s town residence. He did not look the seedy undergraduate over in his accustomed supercilious manner, but he ushered him at once into the tessellated hall, and handed him over to the attendants there.

The flunkeys all knew him again, perhaps because frayed waistcoats and shiny coats were rare in Belgravia, and the ring of his highlows on the marble floor was a thing to be remembered.

A footman preceded him up the wide staircase, which his feet had never yet trod, and ushered him into the great drawing-room. His heart did not beat a bit fast as he passed up the grand staircase, with the family portraits of the Barclays looking down upon him. He had seen quite as good pictures at the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge, and staircase, too, for the matter of that, to say nothing of the ceiling, which one must dislocate one’s neck to look at. These things were quite indifferent to him now, and didn’t even impress him as they did the first time.

Mary Barclay was at the further end of the long drawing-room, and in the gloom of the winter day, and the glory and grandeur of the apartment, he did not see her when he first entered. The carpet was so soft that his highlows were unheard as he walked gravely through the room, looking round with a mild interest upon this unwonted exhibition of wealth. The walls and the curtains and the furniture of the room were covered with white satin, delicately embroidered in soft, low tints. There were pictures by Boucher and Watteau and Lancret on the walls, and *objets d’art* scattered in profusion all over the room. On the mantelpiece was

a suite of priceless old Sèvres vases, and in the centre a clock, the enamelled dial like a belt encircling the globe of old *pâte tendre*. While Herbert was glancing at it and mentally comparing it with a very honest timekeeper of abnormal size, that had once belonged to the old coach, and now reposed in his waistcoat-pocket, Mary Barclay came forward from a window where she had been writing.

She greeted him very kindly, and made him sit down on one of the magnificent satin-covered couches, which he did with much inward trepidation as to the result, and ruefully contemplated his muddy boots on the delicate Aubusson carpet. He didn't contemplate them long. Before he had been five minutes in the stately room, he had forgotten that his coat was shiny, that his linen was frayed, that he was an inpecunious undergraduate, and that all grandeur around him was anything at all unusual.

Mary Barclay set him completely at his ease, and he was as much at home with her there as he had been in the little sitting-room at the Bull Hotel.

She congratulated him on his last escapade; she had heard all about it, and her beautiful eyes grew moist as she praised his courage in acting as he had done.

'It was very noble; it was very manly of you to apologize,' she said with rising colour; and her lips trembled as she spoke. 'It was true courage. Forgive my asking you, for I am sure you had just provocation for your act, but—but—was there a woman in it?'

Her lovely face was covered with blushes as she asked this question, and her eyes fell before Herbert's.

'Yes,' he said quietly, 'there was a woman in it. There always is, I am told, in such quarrels; but I had no right to constitute myself her champion. She was nothing to me, and I was to blame.'

Mary Barclay's eyes were flashing, and her cheeks were crimson and her bosom was heaving; she was so easily moved by any noble thing.

'It was all the more chivalrous of you,' she said softly. 'I don't think the men of old ever considered whether they had the right, or not. They were self-constituted avengers of wrong and oppression, and they always espoused the cause of the weak. I have no one to espouse my quarrels now,' she said sadly. 'I have no loyal knight and true; would you be my champion, Mr. Flowers, if the time should come——' She stopped suddenly and looked with absent eyes into the wide fireplace, where a log-fire was burning on the hearth.

Herbert smiled sadly; he was thinking of a time when he had pleaded for her to Geraint, when he had implored him to be true to her and to himself; and then he remembered Brown and what he had done, and the lies that he had lied that she should be spared the cruel knowledge of her lover's unfaithfulness.

'You have a champion already,' he said, 'as true a knight as any damsel of old ever had, in Mr. Brown.'

'Mr. Brown!' she repeated impatiently.

She was looking at Herbert with her softening eyes, and she wasn't thinking of Brown.

'Brown is the best and truest fellow in the world,' said Herbert awkwardly; 'and he has reason, whether he knows it or not, to be deeply grateful to you. But he would always be your true, loyal knight for Geraint's sake.'

'And you?' she said softly; 'you are more like him than anyone I have met. You are under no obligation to me, you are so independent; you will take nothing at my hands;' and she glanced wearily round at the splendid room and sighed. 'Will you be my champion if I need one? Will you fight my battles on some nobler field? You will be a great man some day, Mr. Flowers; you will succeed in what the world calls success; a wider field of usefulness, of honour, maybe, than you have ever dreamed of will open before you. In this, when the time comes, will you put aside, as unworthy in comparison, considerations of personal ease and advantage, and espouse the cause of the weak? Will you fight my battles for me against injustice and oppression, and cruelty and wrong? I am only a woman, Mr. Flowers, but I am a steward of so many talents. He would have helped me to use them aright. He would have used his talents and my wealth for wise and noble ends. Now I am alone, my true, chivalrous knight is dead, and all my hopes and aims are withered in the bud.'

She fell into a sudden passion of weeping, like, he remembered, on that sad February day, when they led her away from Geraint's grave. What could he say to comfort her?

Herbert laid his hand involuntarily on hers, such a white, shapely hand, gleaming with rings.

'I hope,' he said gently, bending over her with a strange flutter at his heart—'I hope that no personal consideration will ever prevent my being the champion of the weak, and if you can find no worthier knight to fight your battles, Miss Barclay, you can always count upon me.'

What had he said? What had he done? He flushed up to the roots of his hair directly he had spoken the words, and he would have drawn his hand away; but Mary Barclay held it in hers, in a clasp that made all his pulses leap. And yet he was not thinking of her; he was thinking of the bare room at Bideford, and the small fire there would be, he knew so well, in that cheerless grate over which the little Chelsea boy he had wept over in his childhood kept watch and ward.

The Chelsea china figures in the cabinets in the rooms below seemed all familiar to him, like the faces of old friends, as he passed them walking by Mary Barclay's side to the dining-room beyond. The portraits on the walls, the objects that had awed him on his

first visit, had all settled down into their places as being friendly and familiar, and impressed him with another sensation that he could not account for or understand.

The gold plate on the sideboard, the great silver *épergne*, the silver dishes, the gloomy grandeur of the noble dining-room, did not affect him at all. He was quite used to it. He might have lived in a palace all his life for the interest he took in it. Once during the meal he found himself looking at the monogram on the fork he was using, and, catching himself in the act, blushed guiltily and laid it down.

He promised to come again soon, very soon. There were so many schemes that Mary Barclay wanted to consult him upon, and they would be abortive without his aid.

He smiled when she said this, and looked down into her eager face.

'I know what you are thinking of,' she said impetuously. 'You are thinking of your *Tripes*. You must not let me, you must not let anything, interfere with that. And when that is over, then——'

She did not finish the sentence, but she sighed and pressed his hand; and her own carriage was waiting at the door to drive him to the station.

He took the little Chelsea boy up when he got back to his rooms at Trinity, and looked at it with an unwonted interest. It represented many things to him—prospective things, things that his soul hungered for, and he put it down with a sigh, and turned to the contemplation of some too familiar-looking letters that his duns had left during his absence.

'There has been a feller a-waitin' about the staircase, sir,' said his bedmaker before she left for the night. 'He's a-bin hangin' about here 'most all the day. He wouldn't believe you weren't in till I opened the door an' let him see for hisself. He's about no good, sir, depend upon it. I should keep the door a-sported^c if I were you.'

This lean, meagre, fawning old Ruth had been a faithful friend to Herbert in her humble way during the years he had been at Trinity. She had been bedmaker to that staircase so long that it had become, as it were, her personal property. She took an interest, too, a quite personal interest, in the men who came and went during her long reign. She was quite as proud if her 'gentlemen got through' as the men themselves, and lorded it over the heads of other bedmakers if they happened to take higher places in the lists than their 'gentlemen.'

She had long ago scented Herbert's poverty, but he had so won her soft old heart from the first by his simple, kindly manner that she treated him with the same consideration as if he had been a lord, and—what was more to the point—respected his humble stores of groceries and potted meats and college commons. He had no

need to keep a key turned on anything, indeed, except his letters, and those she did read, and knew all about the little mother and the small household at Bideford.

A strange thing did happen more than once, that puzzled Herbert when he thought at all about it. His tea-caddy not unfrequently ran dry over-night, and, lo ! in the morning some beneficent fairy had come in, without tapping at his oak, and replenished it. The same miracles happened with other daily necessities. No big bundles of grocery dropped exactly from the ceiling, done up neatly in brown paper, and tied with blue and white twine, or were left on the staircase outside the door, like Goldsmith's memorable boots, but like the widow's cruse, Herbert's tea-caddy, when it was at its lowest ebb, had a way of holding out.

The beneficent fairy crossed the Great Court after giving Herbert this piece of advice. She had a habit of cringing which made her stoop, and she wore a frouzy shawl, and she habitually carried a basket beneath it which contained the harvest she had gleaned during the day.

Boaz was free-handed and careless and rich, and his presses were brimming over and his garners overflowing ; and this lean, hungry old Ruth had a bed-ridden husband and a crippled child dependent on her gleanings.

She never looked about her very much as she hobbled through the courts of Trinity, but the figure of a man that passed by the gate as she went out seemed familiar to her, and she turned and looked after him.

'Now, I wonder whether he's a-sported his oak?' she murmured. 'I'll be bound he hasn't, after all my warnin' of him !'

Ruth was quite right. Herbert hadn't taken the precaution to sport his oak.

The man turned in at his staircase as if he knew it, and paused at his door. He did not need to shout 'Come in !' for the man followed the knock directly, and came across the room to where Herbert was sitting.

'Mr. Flowers?' he said in a most unpleasant voice.

Herbert looked up, and nodded an unwilling assent.

Why hadn't he shut his oak?

The man laid an unsavoury-looking bit of yellow paper down before him, and Herbert, who had seen something of the kind before in Brown's possession, felt himself getting extremely uncomfortable, with a creepy-crawly sensation down his spine.

'What is this?' he asked, touching it delicately, as if it were red-hot.

'A county court summons, sir. You are summoned at the suit of Messrs. Blazer and Co., tailors.'

'What is to be done?'

'Why, pay it, sir, of course,' said the man with a grin.

'But if I can't, if I haven't got the money,' said Herbert desperately, 'what is to be done?'

'Spect you'll have to raise it, sir,' said the man, looking round with the eye of a connoisseur at Herbert's poor furniture; 'gents always do. Anyhow, it's got to be paid.'

'Got to be paid.' Herbert kept repeating the words to himself through all that dreary night. They mixed themselves up with his dreams, and were repeated by different voices. Sometimes it was the little mother, sometimes it was Lilian Howell, and she always said it reproachfully, and with such reproofs in her sweet eyes that he could not bear to meet them. Sometimes it was Mary Barclay who was repeating them, and he could see her smiling, as she smiled up into his face when she asked him if he would fight her battles, and she held the yellow paper in one hand and a long netted purse in the other; it was so heavily weighted he could not lift it, and he could see the gleam of the yellow gold through the silken mesh.

While he was still trying to raise it from the ground he awoke. The silken purse had melted away, but the yellow paper was there, on his dressing-table, where he had put it over-night, lest his bedmaker should see it. As if he could hide anything from her eyes!

There were more pressing letters awaiting him on his breakfast-table, and a couple of duns outside his door, when he came in after lecture. He looked round his room, like the man had looked over-night, for some available property to turn into ready money. There was nothing but the old coach's silver inkstand, that had been in jeopardy so often, but it had never been in greater jeopardy than now. He took it up affectionately and read the inscription.

All the dear memories that had been associated with this one relic of the gentle scholar rose before him, and he put it down with a sigh. While he was looking at it his bedmaker had come in to lay the cloth for his luncheon. He put it down hurriedly in some confusion, but she had caught him in the act, and drawn her own conclusions. With all his vigilance, he had gone out that morning and left the paper he was so anxious for her not to see, fluttering its yellow pages in the draught from his ill-fitting window, on his dressing-table.

She could put two and two together as well as most people. She had had occasion to in her hard life. She smoothed out her apron and came over to him, when he was standing by his writing-table, and with a dusky red creeping up into her homely face beneath the wrinkles, she dropped him a sort of curtsey.

'If I may make so bold, sir,' she said humbly, as if she were about to ask a favour, 'I wouldn't do that if I was you. If you happen to be in any difficulty, sir, why don't you go to your tutor? Mr. Routh, sir, is as nice-spoken and as reasonable a gentleman as there is in the college, an' he'll help you out of it. You might do

worse 'n take an old woman's advice, sir ; for I've seen the same thing agoing on here over and over again ; an' I've seen them that's been ruined, and them that's broke the hearts of the people belongin' to 'em. Oh, the scenes that I've witnessed on this staircase ; an' the best-natured young gentlemen in the world a-brought to the dogs, and all through not goin' to their tutor in time !'

Herbert did what no undergraduate with any personal dignity would have done—he took his bedmaker's advice.

Mr. Routh received him with his habitual chilling severity of manner. He was really a delightful man ; but he had spent his lifetime in lonely study and self-companionship, and had acquired a hard, dry, unsympathetic way that did not encourage confidence. Herbert found him sitting by his lonely hearth, in his great, gloomy, panelled room, in the dusky gloom of the December afternoon.

He didn't exactly know how to begin, so he spread the county court summons open before him, and asked him, very humbly, if he would advise him what to do about it.

Mr. Routh had seen documents of that particular nature and hue before, and the embarrassment was by no means a new one to him in his capacity as college tutor.

'And is this all you owe in Cambridge, Mr. Flowers ?' he asked, looking at Herbert with his searching gray eyes.

All !

Herbert poured out his dismal confession. His University debts were not large, but they were numerous, and most of them had been contracted in his freshman's year.

'Why not tell your mother ?' he said ; 'surely she will pay them ? It does not seem to me that you have been extravagant, by any means ; these are all for necessities.'

'Oh, sir, she would if she could—she would if she knew it ; but—but she would starve herself to pay them !'

And then, with his eyes shining and a pink spot on either of his cheeks, Herbert told the tutor what sacrifices Lucy had already made for him.

'I have no right here, sir,' he said bitterly. 'I am out of place here among rich men, and compelled to live above my means. I ought never to have come here ;' and he buried his face in his hands.

'My dear fellow,' said Mr. Routh kindly, and he put his hand on Herbert's shoulder, 'you are in your right place, and this very discipline of poverty that you are so impatient of is—you will acknowledge it by-and-by—the finest discipline in the world. All the men, and they are the greatest, whose memories are preserved in this place, have acknowledged it before you. The very effort of self-control involved in this daily, hourly denial of everything that is superfluous gives both a test of real superiority of character, and leads to the highest and most enduring results in the way of

self-discipline. This University is not only a seat of culture, but a school of life, where experience is gained and character strengthened; where men learn, not only how to deal with their fellow-men, but, in the great battle of life, how to bear themselves like men.'

Herbert looked up with a film before his eyes, and the muscles about his lips working.

'Thank you, sir,' he said simply; 'if—if I can tide over this difficulty, I will never, please God, get into such a strait again. What I cannot pay for I will never have.'

Mr. Routh jotted down, with a very worn bit of blacklead pencil on the back of an envelope, the amount of Herbert's debts. It was ridiculously small, and he smiled as he handed the paper to Herbert.

'Is this all?' he asked. Herbert could remember no others. 'If you will allow me, Mr. Flowers,' he said, 'to be your banker, until you are in a position to pay them yourself, I will give you a cheque for this amount, and you can have the satisfaction of going round Cambridge this afternoon and paying them all before Hall.'

Herbert went out of Mr. Routh's room with a big lump in his throat and a cheque in his hand, and did not get back to Hall till the dinner was nearly over.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE BLACK BOOK.

'Who shall so forecast the years, or reach a hand through time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?'

HERBERT did not go down to Bideford at Christmas. It is but a short vacation, and the time had not yet come when he could return with the honour and distinction that he was always dreaming about.

He had to 'wait a minit,' but the minute was such a long one that, in spite of Mr. Routh's sermon on the wholesome discipline of self-denial, he was getting impatient.

He went to Camberwell, where Trinity College has a special mission of her own, and initiates her sons in missionary work among the home heathen. Here he met Jayne, who had been working at the mission part of the term, and here, amidst children's dinners and kindred devotional exercises of Christian charity, he spent his Christmas. It was quite a new atmosphere to him, and it was neither emotional nor æsthetic. The walls were very bare, and the work was very practical; it was not by any means the

artistic clothing of an ideal. There were no interesting sisters or lay female helpers, in white bands becomingly arranged round their pensive features, and blue cords and tassels round their slender waists.

The only woman that Herbert saw there during his visit was Mary Barclay, who drove over one day to ask Jayne, with whom she was in pretty frequent communication, to send someone to see a protégé of hers who had had an accident. Her carriage was waiting to convey the messenger to the man's sick-bed, and the case was very urgent. The man was not expected to live through the night.

There was no one at the mission but Jayne, and he offered to go alone, and asked Herbert to accompany him. He shrank from the sight of physical suffering. He had never been able to look upon it since that day when Geraint lay dying on his knees in the Lent Races.

While he was debating with himself, Mary Barclay put her hand in his arm and drew him away.

'Come,' she said, 'you have promised to be my knight-errant.'

The drive from Camberwell to Marylebone, where the object of their visit lay, was a long one, through the most crowded parts of London. She had not been able to find spiritual consolation befitting the case nearer than the Camberwell Mission. They talked of many things on the way beside the sufferer to whose bedside they were called—of Jayne's work at the mission, of his ordination. He was to be ordained at Easter under the Bishop of London to a crowded parish in the neighbourhood of Camberwell. The work his soul hungered for—home missions—would be within his grasp.

'I am not fit,' Jayne said with a sigh, 'for missionary work abroad. God knows I would have chosen it if I had been, but He has chosen for me. I am such a poor creature to make my way among men, so heavily handicapped among my fellows, but I can just creep from door to door and take my message with me.'

'And Mr. Brown?' Mary Barclay asked with some anxiety; 'I have heard nothing of him of late. Is he going on well, or is prosperity spoiling him?'

Jayne paused a minute, and looked at a London crowd hanging round the door of a public-house where a fight was going on inside, and the attention of the crowd was rapt. Mary Barclay followed the direction of his eyes, and a look of intelligence passed between them.

'It is a good position,' she said, looking round; 'it is a kind of Seven Dials. These are six dials, at any rate. Will you inquire about it?'

Jayne nodded assent.

'You were asking about Mr. Brown,' he said, 'and whether prosperity is spoiling him. I can only answer the question by saying that I do not think ease, too much ease, is good for any man, parti-

cularly such a man as Brown. The breezy heights of adversity and trial are more bracing, more commensurable with the life that such a nature as Brown's is most fitted for—a life of self-denial and sacrifice. He is, in his way, an enthusiast. He has more power, more real force, though it may be merely spasmodic, than stronger men. I do not know a man in Trinity, I do not know a man in Cambridge, who has more of this vital energy, more of this old martyr spirit that raises men above considerations of personal ease and advantage, and enables them to bear poverty and persecution, and suffering, and martyrdom, if need be, than Brown.'

Mary Barclay was listening to him with dilated eyes, and her face glowing with a strange sympathy in his words.

'I am so glad,' she said, 'so thankful that—that I have been able to help him; that *he*' (she never spoke of Geraint by name) 'recognised this nature in him, and helped him.'

'Recognised?' Herbert interrupted. 'Geraint did not recognise it—he called it forth; he created this new nature in Brown by his own generous act.'

'Then,' she said quietly, 'it is my duty to foster its growth. What can I do for him? how can I help him? You say a life of ease—the ordinary curate life—will not do for him, will stunt his growth?'

Jayne did not answer for a minute; he kept looking out into the streets as if he had not heard her question.

'It is arranged for him to take a curacy under his father, after he is ordained at Easter,' Herbert said, breaking the silence. 'Could anything better happen to him? He is a splendid old fellow, and Brown would have the advantage of his teaching and example, and all the home surroundings.'

Jayne had finished his survey of the streets, and when he looked at Mary Barclay again his face was very white.

'I will never more seek to interfere with God's dealings with my fellow-men,' he said solemnly. 'He who made them has power over the clay He has fashioned, to make them vessels of honour or dishonour, according to His will. If He has a future for Brown, which these failures and disasters of his have specially fitted him for, and I think He has, He will bring it about in His own way and time, without our interference.'

They had reached by this time their destination. The carriage stopped at the door of a poor house in a mean street, and a woman, with her apron to her eyes, and her face swollen with weeping, admitted them.

'Oh, miss, I am so glad you are come! His sufferings are awful to witness. They have sent me out of the room because I could not bear to see them without crying out, and they've got a nurse who is used to such cases. You will never go in, miss; you couldn't bear it, though you don't belong to him. It would kill you, the sight of it, and—and it wouldn't do for you to faint in there.'

She barred the door of the room as she spoke, but Mary Barclay put her aside.

'I shall not faint,' she said quietly ; 'I shall not disturb him with a scene.'

They passed into the room, and left the woman weeping without. It had been a terrible accident, and the crushed and broken limbs had not been set. The man ought to have been taken at once to a hospital, but he had been brought home, and it was too late now to talk of moving him. A hospital surgeon was bending over him, arranging the splints, and a nurse was standing by assisting him.

They both looked up when the door opened, and seeing they were merely visitors, the surgeon, with a slight exclamation of impatience, returned to his work.

Surely visitors were out of place here ?

Jayne wore no clerical uniform to show the nature of his calling, and he made a terrible noise, in that painful silence, broken only by the groans of the injured man, limping across the room. Herbert's coat was coarse enough, and frayed at the edges ; but he hadn't a rope round his waist, so that he did not belong to any sacred order ; and Mary Barclay's rich dress seemed strangely incongruous with the scene.

'Steady, nurse !' the doctor exclaimed sharply ; 'quite steady, if you please !'

The woman thus adjured bent over her task, and the white starched border of her cap concealed her face, which had whitened suddenly on their entrance. She wore the dress of a nursing sister, and a cross and rosary hung by her side.

'It is a bad case,' said Jayne. 'Is the poor fellow sensible ?'

'Scarcely,' said the surgeon ; 'he may be for a few minutes before the end. This will give him some relief, if we can manage it.' And again he bent over the crushed and shattered limb, which he was trying with the nurse's aid to straighten out on a splint.

'Can I help you ?' said Herbert, coming forward. 'I am very strong.'

'It is not strength that is wanted,' said the surgeon, 'but steadiness. This woman is trembling so ; it is putting the poor fellow to unnecessary torture. Why, nurse, what is the matter ?'

The nursing sister raised a pleading white face, that Herbert, with a sudden pang, recognised. She did not look at him ; she only looked at the doctor ; but he caught the sudden flash of the dark eyes, and the tremulous movement of the beautiful mouth, and he recognised her in a moment. It was Hebe Bellenden.

Mary Barclay, who was standing by the couch, wiping with her handkerchief the heavy dews that had gathered on the brow of the sufferer, came to her aid.

'Let me help you, nurse.'

She put out her white, ungloved hands as she spoke, and

supported the poor mutilated limb. With one swift glance the surgeon expressed his approval of the change.

'You can hold it steady?' he said.

'Quite,' she answered.

The nursing sister gave up her place, and supported the limb lower down. She had ceased to tremble now; but when her hand by accident touched the hand of Mary Barclay, she drew it away with a shiver, that called forth another reproof from the doctor.

Herbert watched them from the other side of the couch—the two women who had loved Geraint, whose death had brought them together, as his life could never have done.

The task was a harder one than Mary Barclay had expected. It took so long to arrange those never-ending bandages; and the limb had to be sustained lightly and steadily by her unaccustomed hands. The strain, after the first few minutes, was almost more than she could bear. Herbert saw her cheek gradually pale, and her brow contract, and her lips pressed tightly together; but she did not flinch from her task.

The diamonds on her fingers flashed and scintillated in the light; but her hands never trembled nor faltered.

'Can you hold out three minutes longer?' the surgeon asked presently.

She did not trust herself to speak, but she smiled her answer bravely across the bed. He did not ask the nursing sister; she was used to the work, and, now that the surprise and shock of that first recognition was over, had risen to the occasion.

Herbert took out his watch and counted the minutes. One! two! There was a pink spot on the nursing sister's face, where the rouge used to be, and she had bitten her white lips till they were scarlet; and there was a strained look of anguish in her eyes, that reminded Herbert of that awful moment in the waiting room at Ely.

How long the minute-hand was in creeping round! surely there was something wrong with the works! Three!

The surgeon looked up with a sigh of relief.

'Now,' he said briefly; and the limb, beautifully composed, was laid tenderly down.

Mary Barclay's eyes were shining as she looked up with a glow of thankfulness for the strength that had been given her; and in the same moment Hebe fell back senseless into Herbert's arms.

He bore her out of the room on to the landing outside, and threw open the window to give her air. The noise and the nameless scents of a foul London court rose up from beneath as they stood there, with only the feeble light of a gas-lamp in the court to show him when the colour came back to the white face on his shoulder.

Her cap had fallen off, and the pale gold of her lovely hair fell about his shoulders; and it was no longer the nursing sister, but Hebe Bellenden, the Belle of Cambridge, he held in his arms.

She opened her eyes presently, and shivered.

'Shall I close the window?' he asked. 'Are you cold?'

'No,' she said wearily; 'it is not that. I knew her when you brought her in. It is the woman that he gave up for me! It was for his sake she held out so well; I read it in her face—her beautiful face, that he left for me! Oh, don't tell me that she held out longer than I did, that she endured more than I did for his sake!'

'No,' said Herbert, with a shiver that he could not repress. 'You held out one second longer.'

'Oh, if he only knew what I am doing and suffering for his sake,' she said, with a little wan smile, 'I think he would forgive me. I have neither home nor friends. I live in the midst of loathsome disease, of filth and squalor and hideous suffering, for his sake. But what is she doing—oh, tell me what is she doing?'

She was so eager that she had steadied herself by the window, and was clutching Herbert's arm with convulsive energy, and her eyes were luminous in the darkness.

'Miss Barclay is spending a million of money,' said Herbert quietly.

The door opened and Mary Barclay came out of the sick-room.

'Will you call my carriage, Mr. Flowers,' she said, 'if the nurse is well enough to go back to her charge?'

Jayne stayed with the sick man, and Herbert drove back with Mary Barclay.

Herbert was thinking of those rubies of Hebe Bellenden's as he sat looking out into the deserted streets as the carriage wended its way back to Belgravia. Clearly it was his duty to return them, but how? It was impossible for him to redeem them; in a few weeks it would be impossible for anyone to redeem them, and they were not pledged for a tithe of their value. Brown knew nothing about the transaction, and if Herbert lost this chance he might never meet with Hebe Bellenden again.

'I want you to give me twenty-five pounds,' Herbert said presently; 'I want it to-night, and—and I want you to give it without asking for what purpose it is required.'

He asked the favour so awkwardly, and he blushed so ridiculously—she could see it in the lamplight—that Mary Barclay looked at him with a strange inquiry in her eyes, and her brow contracted.

'You want it for that woman we have just left?' she said coldly.

'Yes,' said Herbert; 'you have guessed right. I want it for—that woman. It is a loan—not made to me, to Brown—that ought to be repaid.'

'To Mr. Brown?' she interrupted scornfully; 'that woman is a—~~a~~ friend of Mr. Brown's?' and before her rose a vision of the nursing sister with her luminous eyes, and the wealth of pale-gold

hair that had escaped from her cap, streaming over her coarse gown.

'No,' said Herbert; 'Brown never saw her in his life. She did it for my sake!'

'For yours!'

The flexible voice was harder and colder, and there was a ring of bitterness in it.

'Yes, for mine,' said Herbert sadly, 'I happened to do her a service—she was pleased to call it a great service—and she helped Brown, without his knowledge, in gratitude for the service I rendered her.'

'And you would repay her?'

'I would certainly return the loan with my own money if I had it, and if not with——'

'With mine?'

'With yours, if you wish it—if not, the jewels will be lost. I pledged them a year ago. She had not the money; she could only give him her jewels.'

'And she did not know Mr. Brown?'

'He was a perfect stranger to her.'

'You shall have the money, Mr. Flowers, to-night. You must have done that lady a great service for her to have repaid it so nobly with her jewels. Was I not right in calling you a knight-errant if you go about fighting the battle of distressed damsels and taking no reward? I do this for your friend, but is there nothing I can do for you?'

Her voice trembled and faltered as she spoke, and Herbert saw that her face had softened, and that she was smiling upon him. He thought for one moment of the little mother, and the bare Christmas hearth, and the poverty, and the struggles that lay before him, and for a moment he hesitated; then he looked up into the beautiful face and said very quietly:

'No; there is nothing you can do for me. I will fight my own battles, please God; and the vision of ease, and comfort, and the world's favour faded suddenly away.'

Jayne received a small packet by registered post the following day, with a letter from Herbert enclosed, requesting him to place it in the hands of the nursing sister who had fainted in the sick-room.

Brown came up to Cambridge for a few days just before Easter. He had finished his reading; concluded his arrangements with the Bishop's chaplain, all but a few quite formal preliminaries; his *Si Quis* was read in his father's church, and he was to be ordained at Easter.

He was in the highest possible spirits, and had almost forgotten, in the new delightful atmosphere of prosperity, the failures and disasters that had marked his college career. He called upon the divinity professors quite early in the day, and obtained the

necessary certificates of attendance at their lectures ; but he put off his visit to his old tutor until the afternoon.

'I wish you would come over with me, Flowers,' he said, beaming at Herbert over the modest cutlets ; 'I must get my college testimonials this afternoon from Routh. When I have got those I shall have got all the papers that are necessary ;' and he tapped his pocket-book, which lay by his side upon the table, with evident satisfaction.

Brown looked affectionately round the Great Court, even favouring the fountain with a nod of recognition, as he crossed over to Mr. Routh's rooms. He climbed the stairs gaily ; he had never climbed them so gaily before. He recalled smilingly with what a heavy heart, and with what awful premonitory thumpings, he used to climb them in his naughty undergraduate days ; but he had no premonitory thumpings now, not even when he knocked at the tutor's door.

The well-remembered voice said 'Come in !' and he went in. Not shaky or weak in the knees, by any means. He had forgotten all about his misdeeds, if Mr. Routh hadn't. It was nothing new to him that Mr. Routh received him coldly ; he received everybody coldly, and that particular iciness of demeanour Brown was already familiar with. Still, Routh might have laid it aside now, now that he wore his B.A. gown, with the ribbons well to the front—he had brought it up on purpose to pay this visit.

'I am to be ordained, sir, at Easter,' Brown began modestly, but with some amount of pride—Mr. Routh was a divine himself—and I have come up to ask you for my college testimonials.'

Mr. Routh raised his very thin eyebrows perceptibly, and fixed Brown with his cold gray eyes.

'I do not think, Mr. Brown,' he said slowly, as if his words froze as they dropped, 'that the college will be disposed to grant you testimonials.'

'Not grant testimonials !' Brown gasped, with a distinct sensation of cold water running down his spine.

'I cannot recommend them to do so,' Mr. Routh replied discouragingly.

'Oh, sir, what am I to do ? Will the Bishop ordain me without them ?'

Brown's face had gone quite white, and the smile with which he had greeted the fountain had died quite out of it.

'The Bishop certainly will not unless you can explain satisfactorily the grounds upon which testimonials have been refused.'

Mr. Routh's face was very grave as he spoke, and he looked severely over his glasses at the crestfallen graduate feebly twirling his ribbons.

Brown groaned aloud.

'Surely, sir,' he said, 'the college will not be so hard, so ungenerous. Oh, sir, what have I done to deserve this ?'

'I will show you what you have done,' said the tutor quietly 'The college authorities are neither hard nor ungenerous. They are simply just, as you will allow when you have seen this.'

He took down from a shelf as he spoke a large folio volume, and opened it on the table before him.

'There,' said he, pointing to the closely-ruled pages, and running his finger down the margin till he came to his name. 'There, Mr. Brown, is the record of your University career from the first term to the last—your chapels, lectures, gates, fines, breaches of college discipline, the letters you have received from the Dean, the reprimands you have received from your tutor, the offences for which you have been proctorized, the examinations you have failed in, the terms you have been sent down.'

The Black Book was open before him—the record of all the omissions and commissions of those stormy years, set down with painful neatness and exactitude. All the follies and excesses of his thoughtless youth laid bare—all the lost opportunities, the reckless disregard of authority, the humiliating defeats, the crowning shame and failure—it was all there, beautifully written with an inexorable pen. No gentle recording angel had dropped a tear—had not made a blot, even—to wipe out a single record of Mr. Brown's undergraduate career.

Brown looked ruefully down the dismal list as Mr. Routh made a running commentary upon it.

'To obtain college testimonials, you are expected to attend chapel six times at least during the week and twice on Sundays. In your first term you kept nine chapels, in your second six, in your third three. This was the record of your freshman's year. In your second year you kept, during the three terms, seventeen chapels, and in your third year nine. You have received a letter from the Dean once every term of your three years' residence, warning you that your neglect of chapels would disqualify you for testimonials for Holy Orders. Three letters from the Dean are fatal, and you have received nine.'

'Oh, sir,' said Brown; but he couldn't get any further. He had forgotten all about these sins of his youth, and he thought everybody else had. It was like the dead rising up to witness against him. It was like the opening of another Book. He stood silent and guilty before that awful record. By his own deeds he was judged.

'In the face of all this, Mr. Brown,' said the tutor in his hard, even tones, 'you will see that the college authorities could not conscientiously grant testimonials.'

'No,' said Brown; and then looking from that black list to Herbert's kind face, and reading the true manly sympathy written in every line of it, he broke down and burst into tears.

'My poor fellow!' said Herbert; and he laid his hand on his shoulder. 'Oh, sir,' he said, appealing to Mr. Routh with tears

rising in his eyes, 'do not judge him too harshly; you know his repentance is sincere. To his own Master he standeth or falleth.'

'I do not judge him,' said Mr. Routh, 'Heaven forbid! but I cannot ignore the painful records of this book. Mr. Brown must write to the Bishop and tell him the truth; and after a time of probation, if his repentance is sincere, he may accept him.'

There was nothing more to be said, and Herbert led Brown out of the room. The tears were streaming down his face over his ribbons, and he had quite lost his self-control. There were men flying up the stairs, and Herbert wasn't quite master of himself, and they looked like two schoolboys after a whipping coming out of the tutor's room, so he drew him aside into a lecture-room beyond that fortunately was empty. Brown didn't nod to the fountain on his way back, and he didn't regard the Great Court, the scene of so many shameful defeats and disasters, with any particular favour. He crept humbly up the familiar staircase, and when he was once in Herbert's room, out of the sight of inquisitive eyes, he threw himself on his knees beside Herbert's couch, and buried his poor tear-stained face in his pillow.

'It is just,' he groaned; 'but it is justice without mercy. I am only reaping the harvest that I have sown!'

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE STORY OF THE DEAN'S RING.

'... Men may rise on stepping-stones
Of their dead selves to higher things.'

WHEN Herbert came out of Hall, instead of returning to his rooms, he turned involuntarily the other way, and went through the cloisters in the direction of the Dean's staircase. Brown had gone over to Emmanuel to pour out his trouble to Harvard.

There was a light burning in the Dean's window, and Herbert took heart and went up. The Dean was writing when Herbert went in, but he pushed aside his papers and asked him to take the vacant chair by the hearth. There was something in Herbert's manner that arrested attention as he declined the chair and came up to the table where he was writing and stood by his side.

'You told me once, sir,' he began, 'to come to you if I was in trouble or extremity of any kind, and that you would help me;' and he glanced down involuntarily on the Dean's ring, which had caught the light from the shaded candles, and shone like a watchful eye upon the hand that rested on the table.

The Dean followed the direction of his eyes and smiled.

'And you have taken me at my word?' he said kindly.

'I have taken you at your word, sir. I am in trouble now, and I have come to you for your help.'

And then, standing there, looking down at the watchful eye, he told the Dean the story of Brown's disappointment, and the shipwreck of all his hopes. The Dean knew it all before, but he listened patiently, and with a ready sympathy, as if the story were not as old as the hills—youthful folly, recklessness, shame, despair, contrition, repentance, in their natural order and sequence.

Herbert dwelt on the sincerity of Brown's repentance, on his deep convictions and earnestness, and urged that this stumbling-block in his way would dishearten and discourage him, and blight all his prospects.

The Dean listened to the end.

'You have pleaded your friend's cause well, Mr. Flowers,' he said; 'but Mr. Brown has a better advocate here,' and he smiled sadly down upon the ring. 'I never tell this story except to men who come to me in trouble: you may tell it to your friend, but to none other. I had a brother, a very dear brother, the youngest of a large family—a manly, generous fellow, a perfect Absalom for beauty and strength, and most tenderly beloved by us all. He was an undergraduate here in Cambridge, and fell, in his first year, when he was only a boy let loose from school, taking his first flight, into a fast set. He was easily led, and fell into temptation; went, indeed, from one excess to another; grew reckless, desperate—there was no one to counsel him, no hand stretched out to succour him——' The Dean's voice faltered as he spoke, and he put his hand across his eyes. 'It was Mr. Brown's story over again,' he said presently, 'without the merciful intervention. It broke his parents' heart. He was their pride—the joy of their age. They sank under it. My father died within six months, and my mother died during the year. Before they died they implored me, for his sake, never to be harsh or severe with any man who came to me in trouble. I have worn this ring since their death to remind me of my promise. You see it has their hair in it.' And he held the ring up to the light, that Herbert might see the strands of faded hair beneath the glass. 'It is like seeing their dear faces. If I am in doubt, and am tempted to be hasty or severe, these kind counsellors are always at hand to advise me. Many an undergraduate of Trinity has to thank them, and not me, for the leniency shown him. I should have sent many a man down but for the pleading voice that speaks to me from the ring, "Give him another chance. Think of his mother!"'

Herbert went direct from the Dean's rooms to Emmanuel College to find Brown, and tell him that the Dean would be glad to see him. Brown was not in Harvard's rooms, but on Harvard's table was a freshly-written message, saying that they had gone to a meet-

ing held at the Guildhall, and asking Herbert to join them there.

The large hall was so crowded when Herbert got there that he could not make his way to the front, where a great many University men were collected. In a knot of men under the platform he saw Brown. He knew him a long way off, in a moment, by his red eyes and his white face, and his generally limp appearance.

The object of the meeting was to welcome back some Cambridge men who had lately returned from the mission-field. They had gone out before Herbert's time, and were strangers to him; he had not even heard of them. They had not taken high places in the lists, they had won no University laurels; but there could be no mistake in the heartiness of their reception. It quite moved them when they came modestly forward, a little band browned by Indian suns and bearing the unmistakable lines of toil and suffering on their faces. They told the tale of their labours in a quiet, unaffected way, touching lightly on their privations and sufferings, acknowledging failures, and giving God the glory for whatever measure of success had been vouchsafed to them.

One by one they got up and sat down, looking dreadfully uncomfortable and shamefaced for having so little to tell. It had all been real enough, and hard enough to bear, Heaven knew at the time, and *all* that they had passed through. He only knew whose servants they were; but it seemed very little to tell when told in a few brief words before that eager audience.

The last speaker was greeted with applause by the University men under the platform. He had been the best half-back in the University football team. He had come home on the sick-list, and his face looked worn and white beneath the bronze, but his dark bright eyes were glowing with enthusiasm. He had nothing very heroic, he said, to tell them. He should have had nothing at all to tell them if the work had depended upon him. He believed he was chosen out of that University because he was the worst man in it. If not the worst, he was certainly the weakest. That had been his only qualification for the work: his weakness. He told how he had been chosen from among many others—men who had taken high degrees, who had led exemplary lives, had never been tempted, had never fallen—how all these had been set aside, and the poor earthen vessel that had got nothing in it, that was emptied of self, had been chosen before the vessels of silver and of gold.

• He was quite in earnest, and his brave, worn face glowed with enthusiasm as he spoke of the blessedness of the work to which he had been called—a blessedness he described with that wonderful exaltation that Herbert had sometimes seen before on the faces of other men in Cambridge—he had seen it on Jayne's, on Harvard's—a blessedness that was a much loftier and deeper thing than happiness. He called upon those who were there, who had found

disenchantment in success, weariness in riches, satiety in self-indulgence, to help them, and taste of this blessedness.

It was only picked men that they wanted—men who were emptied of self. He appealed to his old University friends, who had taken their degrees, and the undergraduates who were filling the great army of the Church, to come forward and say, 'Here am I; send me!'

Herbert thought he did hear a voice he knew very well repeating these words, but it was drowned in the cheers that closed the eloquent appeal of the last speaker.

Herbert went back to Trinity alone, for he could find neither Harvard nor Brown in the crowd that poured out of the hall. He had been *back* nearly two hours, sitting alone in his room, with the speaker's last words, 'Send me!' ringing in his ears, when Brown came in.

His eyes were no longer red and his cheeks pale. His face was shining, and there was the light one doesn't see very often on the unemotional faces of one's friends—the light of ecstasy.

'It's all right, dear boy!' Brown exclaimed, coming over to Herbert and shaking him heartily by the hand; 'it's all right; I have found my vocation at last. The society has accepted me, and I am going to the Soudan as a missionary.'

Then Herbert told him about his visit to the Dean, and that he had promised to write to the Bishop.

Brown was far too elated to be moved even by this unexpected kindness.

'My dear fellow,' he said, with a little catch in his voice, and his eyes beaming with that strange fire, 'I understand it all now—all my failures and disappointments. It came to me in a flash while that fellow was speaking—the vessel broken on the wheel, the rude, empty, misshapen vessel, rejected of men, fitted by its very emptiness for the Master's use, that the excellency might be all of Him.'

'You've hit the right nail on the head at last, old man,' said Harvard, who had just found a convenient bit of wall-room to lean against. 'I think the tracks are pretty clear, clear as the fire and the cloud that guided a people once through a certain wilderness, that has always seemed to me to typify human life. There's been a good deal of cloud in your life, Brown, old man, but you've hit upon the right beacon at last. You stick to missionary work, old man. A life of ease and lawn-tennis in a country parish, with that old governor of yours, would have been the ruin of you. Whatever there's good in you I'll have to be wrung out, threshed out by hardships and trials, and martyrdom, if need be. I do believe, Brown, that the honour of martyrdom may yet be yours! You may be going out to torture and to death, as you certainly are going out with your life in your hands, to a terrible climate, amid a fanatical race. I've half a mind, indeed, to go with you myself.'

'No, really?' said Brown; and his face beamed across the table as if he had been promised a very distinguished honour.

The picture Harvard drew did not shake Brown's resolution. The mission accepted him to go out as a layman if need be; to go out as an ordained preacher, if a Bishop could be found to ordain him; but to go out in any case.

There was not a happier man in Trinity than Brown when he came up again some time later to take leave of his friends in Trinity. He had so many good-wishers who crowded round him at that last supreme moment. He couldn't see one of them for the mist that blurred all their familiar faces into one—a shining one.

The most affecting parting was with his old tutor, Mr. Routh. He went in to him alone with a grave face; he didn't even acknowledge the fountain on the way. He hadn't any favour to ask now; the Black Book had no longer any terrors for him. The discipline was all over, and he was going to thank the kind, just hand that had inflicted it.

He stayed a long time in that inner room, and the sunshine had slipped off the grass of the court, and was climbing the gray wall of the college chapel, when he came out. The court was full of men, but he did not seek to hide his tear-stained face from them, as he came, for the last time, crying like a whipped schoolboy from the tutor's room.

It was very soon after the Rev. Richard Brown started for the Soudan, with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night hanging over the Peninsular and Oriental steamship that conveyed him to the scene of his labours, that Herbert received a hasty summons to Bideford.

Lucy had been ailing through the spring—a chill English spring—and now, without any previous warning, Herbert was summoned hurriedly to her bedside. The summons was written in an unfamiliar hand, and it was very brief. Its very brevity alarmed him. He read in it the thoughtful consideration of his mother who would not suffer him to be alarmed, and it alarmed him the more, and, having obtained an *excuse*, he started for Bideford by the next train.

It was quite late in the night when he arrived, the train had stopped so long at Exeter—at least, it seemed so long to him.

The moon was up when he reached Bideford, and it shone upon his path through the branches of the old elm-trees as he climbed the familiar road, and there was a strange hush he noticed in the air. The trees no longer whispered to him; the last year's leaves had all blown away, and the branches were bare.

There was a light in the upper room of the cottage, and the latch of the door was down.

While he stood shaking it in his old impatient way, he heard a step on the stairs—a strange step—and the door was opened. The woman who opened it carried a light in her hand. He looked at

her with a bewildered air, and a sudden pain at his heart. It was Julie.

'You are surprised to see me,' she said, drawing him in and closing the door softly. 'I am nursing your mother.'

She was so unlike the Julie of former days that no wonder he was bewildered. Her face was pale, and her dress untidy; the fringe and the little kiss-me-quick curls were gone, and her hair was pinned up in a knot behind that looked as if it had not been taken down for many days.

'My mother! Oh, Julie, how good of you! How is she?'

'Hush!' she said, putting her finger to her lips. It was a very dirty finger, and her hands were coarse and soiled, as if with household work. 'She will hear you; she was sleeping when I left her, and I must prepare her. The shock of seeing you without might kill her.'

'Good God! Julie; she is not so bad as that.'

All the colour had gone out of the poor boy's face, and his eyes had a look of unspeakable alarm in them that went to the woman's vain, tricky heart.

'She is very ill,' she said softly, laying her hand gently upon his arm. He didn't shrink from it now, though it was soiled and rough with dirty work. 'She would not have sent for you else, the weakness has increased so fast. I did not think that she could last until you came.'

'Oh, why was I not sent for before? Why did you let it go on so long without telling me?'

He wrung his hands in his impotent grief, and Julie drew him into the room beyond, lest the sound of his wailing should go before her up the stairs.

It was the old familiar kitchen, dark and deserted now; there was no fire in the grate, and the chimney-corner where he had sat in his childhood was empty—no, not empty, for his own little stool was still there.

The sight of it, beside that desolate hearth, brought the tears to his eyes. The dearest memories of his life hung round those happy, innocent days, when he sat on the old stool by the kitchen firelight.

Julie followed the direction of his eyes.

'Ah,' she said, clasping her hands in her foreign way, 'the place looks deserted! We have had no fire here for a week; we have had it night and day upstairs. There is no one to chop wood or carry coals, so we have done without it.'

'Is there no servant?' Herbert asked impatiently.

It hurt him dreadfully to see the dear old place look so forlorn and neglected. He had never seen it dirty in his life, and now the dust lay thick on everything, and its desolation was aggravated by squalor that the candle-light but half revealed.

'There has been no servant for months,' said Julie. 'Your mother could not afford to keep one. And—and when I came to

her I helped her with the work. It has been neglected while she has been ill. I have sat up with her every night, and I have been too tired and too *distract* to do much by day.'

'Oh, Julie,' Herbert said, 'how good of you! I can chop the wood now, and help you if, please God, we can only bring the dear mother round again.'

There was a sound of a weak cough in the room above, and Julie flew up the stairs and left Herbert standing in the kitchen among his desolate household gods.

Lucy had been ailing all the winter, and a neglected cold had brought on inflammation of the lungs. In her unselfish economy she had not sought medical advice until too late. She had been pinching herself for years, and now, through a hard winter and a cruel spring, she had done without the assistance of the little maid, and undermined her constitution by exposure and labours beyond her strength.

Herbert was shocked to see the change that these few months had wrought in the dear face when he bent over it, and kissed the damp forehead.

'My darling!' she whispered.

The voice was unchanged, though the breathing was laboured, and the dear eyes dwelt upon his face with a devouring love he had never seen in any other.

He was silent. He could not trust himself to speak, as he sat with her hand in his, watching the dear face and listening to the short, laboured breath. He thought of many things while he sat there, and reproached himself that—that there had been so little confidence between them. Perhaps she read the vain regrets, the unavailing remorse and contrition, in his stricken face as he watched beside her through the night. The scales had fallen from her eyes now, if there had ever been any, and she read the boy's troubled soul like the clear face of a mirror. Did she not, above all others, know how true and tender and manly his heart was? There never had been but one cloud between them, and now that had passed away.

If she had wronged him in her heart, her secret heart, that had borne so bravely the scoffs and reproaches of her great neighbours at the Court, of her lowly neighbours in the town, it was all over now. Julie was there ministering to her, and she smiled up into the tired face as she pressed some nourishment upon her.

'No, let me,' said Herbert; and he took the cup from the woman's hand.

'She has been very good to me,' said Lucy, following her with her wistful eyes; 'she has nursed me like a daughter. You must be kind to her for my sake; she has been cruelly wronged.'

The cough prevented her saying more, and she fell back on the pillow gasping for breath.

'I will not lie down if you let her talk,' said Julie, coming back

from that inner room where she had thrown herself, dressed as she was, on a couch for a few hours' rest while Herbert watched. 'It will kill her if you let her excite herself. She must be kept very quiet.'

Herbert promised to be careful, and she went back into the room, leaving the door ajar.

Lucy lay back breathing with great difficulty through the night, with her tender eyes fixed upon his face, and her hand in his. They had so much to say to each other at this supreme moment, and they said so little. Perhaps that silent language was best understood.

She was so peaceful, so happy; the work of her life was done—oh, so well done! Her boy's future was assured. He had already won success, distinction; and Fame, even now in that poor room, was unrolling her *Honoris Causa* before her failing eyes. She had nothing left to do but to give him her blessing.

Herbert sat with swelling heart by her side, recalling all her tenderness in the past—all the acts of unspeakable devotion that had blessed his life, and reproaching himself, at that supreme moment, for his thoughtless neglect and coldness. He never once thought of Mary Barclay during that silent watch; but once he wished that Lilian Howell could have been the ministering angel there, as he had seen her beside another bed. And then his thoughts for the first time reverted to the woman whose heavy breathing he had heard in the inner chamber.

Lucy was watching him, and seemed to read his thoughts as he glanced over to the open door.

'She has been cruelly deceived,' she whispered, as she followed the direction of his eyes. 'He took her away, and—and there was a marriage, and—and he—they gave out that it was *you*.'

Herbert saw it all in a moment. The scorn and coldness of his friends; the sudden aversion of Lilian Howell; Spurway's confusion, and the secrecy he had imposed upon him—it was all quite clear now.

'Thank God it isn't, mother,' he said; and he stooped down and kissed her. 'It might have been. I have been very foolish and easily led. I have reason to say every day of my life the words I learnt at your knee, "Lead us not into temptation."'

She smiled, and looked up at the white ceiling, and a light came into her face.

'Would you like me to say it once more beside you, mother?' he said; 'there is not a day in my life since I have been away that I have not said it, and thought of you.'

She laid her hand upon his head as he knelt there, and repeated the words that she had taught him when a little child, and a look of ineffable tenderness and peace came into her eyes, and her lips softly repeated the familiar words after him.

But even while he was kneeling there the dear voice faltered

and failed, and the lips quivered; and he repeated the last words alone, 'For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory!' Surely there was a change? The lips were still and smiling, and the dear face lay peacefully against his breast—a face with a glory over it—but the little mother had gone away.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SPURWAY'S CONFESSION.

'I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel.'

HERBERT returned to Cambridge directly after the funeral. They buried Lucy in the same grave with the old coach. Herbert used to play about it when he was a boy, and he remembered, as he stood there, looking down into the yawning chasm that held everything he loved on earth, how he used to leap over that green mound with a certain pride of ownership in it. It was his only freehold.

There were no wreaths sent by sympathizing friends to lay upon the widow's plain coffin. There was only a little cross of spring flowers, made by Julie's deft fingers, and wet with the only unselfish tears she had ever shed. Nobody missed her, she had led such a lonely life, and everybody had stood aloof from her in her poverty, and, alas! kind words were the only form of charity that endeared her to her poorer neighbours.

Herbert's grief was too fresh to allow him to talk about his loss to his friends when he returned to Cambridge. Indeed, few knew the loss he had sustained, and he shrank from sympathy with a bitter, unreasoning impatience. It was his first real sorrow, and in these early days all the aims and objects of his life had no longer any value or meaning to him. Work came as a relief, a panacea for pain; and for its own sake, for the gift it brought of ceaseless occupation of the mind and weariness of body, he clung to it with a fierce tenacity.

He stayed up through the short vacation—he had nowhere to go down to now—and worked like a horse. He was a perfect shadow of his former self when he went in in May for his Tripos examination.

Mr. Routh watched him with some anxiety. He had no doubt about the result; his only fear was that he would break down before the examination was over. He knew the story of his loss, and he had wisely encouraged him to fly to the Consoler Who alone outstrips time in this especial gift of healing. Perhaps he

had tried it himself? There might have been a green grave somewhere in his memory; there is in most men's.

In that last three months of prodigious labour Herbert had, if not exactly broken the neck of another Tripos, bent at least its iron sinew. He was quite sure of a place—somewhere; he didn't mind where now—in the Classical Tripos, and at the last moment he decided to take mathematics at the same time.

It had been his intention to wait another year, and thus, maybe, get a double-first; but now things were altered, and success and failure, seen through the gray medium of his sorrow, were very much alike.

He found that in coming back to his work, in the first rawness of his grief, the dear face that he had lost was for ever looking out at him from the familiar pages of the immortals, who told the same story—the old, old-fashioned story of human loss and sorrow. He could find no consolation here, but in the tougher region of mathematics he could keep memory at arm's length.

It was quite a trouble to him when the examinations were all over, and he had nothing to do but to fold his hands and await the results. His occupation was gone, and if he didn't exactly weep, like Alexander, because he hadn't another Tripos to conquer, he broke utterly down—not, as he complained, from overwork, but for the lack of it.

His tutor wanted him to go down to Hunstanton, Lynn, anywhere out of sight of examiners and the Senate-house, until the lists were out. But Herbert was not to be persuaded. He hadn't the money to begin with, and he had not the all-absorbing interest in the result that happier men had. He had worked for the last month until he could literally neither see, stand, nor sit. He never went out during this time save to Hall and chapel, and then he would go back to his rooms and work till dawn the next day. He had no longer any interest in his college boat, he had not played cricket this season, and he had given up his running at Fenner's. Whatever strength of body or mind he had, he had resolutely brought it to bear on the subjects he set before him, and, in his fierce grasp of them, he had excluded everything else.

When the strain was over he hadn't very much energy of mind or body left. He left his commons untasted, and he seldom came to Hall, and he walked about the courts in his ragged gown and his limp, disreputable cap, with his sunken eyes and hollow cheeks, a mote in the sweet June sunshine. Lilian Howell met him sometimes in his solitary walks, and looked after him with a strange pity and softening in her sweet eyes. She had heard from Muriel Spurway of his mother's death, and maybe of Julie, the abandoned, being still beneath his mother's roof. She was very sorry for him, but she didn't tell him so, and if she looked his way in chapel, it was at her betrothed, who sat on a bench near him.

He understood it all now. Her cold looks, her sudden aversion,

all were explained. He would have chafed under it terribly once, but now, with that fierce, dull misery in his heart, he was indifferent to it. What could it matter to her now whether he were innocent or guilty? It was better, surely it was better, that she should believe him guilty than the man that she had promised to marry.

Spurway had told him, on his oath, that it was all off with the little governess, and Julie was living in poverty and seclusion. Why should this cruel story ever reach her pure ears? It were better that he should suffer a thousand times than that her innocent maiden peace should be disturbed.

He told himself so, and he thought he believed it; but in his heart he chafed beneath the injustice of the imputation that a word of Spurway's could remove.

On the eve of the day when the lists of the Classical Trips would be out, a terrible thunderstorm broke over Cambridge, and raged for hours with ever-increasing violence. It had been a sultry day, and the heat, even in the cool of the evening, was unbearable.

Every window was open in the Great Court, and in not a few of the rooms men were celebrating their successes, or drowning their failures in wining with friends. There was more shouting and uproar than usual, but above all the lusty cheers and the noisy choruses rose the sullen roar of the thunder.

Herbert sat by the open window watching the lightning flashing in continuous sheets across the sky and lighting up the court like daylight, but by-and-by there came a sheet of lurid flame, more vivid than the rest, and he felt its hot breath scorching his face, and he rose hurriedly and shut the window. As he stood there, with the lightning playing around him, he saw a figure hurrying across the court. The thunder that followed was so terrific that it shook every pane of glass in Trinity, and the solid stone building quivered beneath it. It was quite impossible to hear any other sounds; and presently his door opened and a man with a terribly scared face came in.

It was Spurway, who had just left the Lodge, and had sought shelter in Herbert's staircase. He was very white, and trembling all over.

'I believe I'm struck!' he said, when he could speak at all, or had a chance of being heard, for the thunder was now continuous. 'It scorched me as I ran through it, and—and I'm sure I smelt the sulphur.'

Herbert reassured him that he was all right, and gave him a glass of water. He had nothing else to give him; but, as he kept shaking and trembling in every limb, like a man with ague, he offered to go to another man's rooms and get him some brandy.

As he was speaking the room was lit up by a blue flame of lightning, that seemed to hiss through it, and a frightful peal of

thunder, of quite appalling duration, again shook the building. Spurway clung to him in sudden frenzy of alarm, and his shaking hands were clammy cold, and great beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead.

'Oh, Flowers,' he cried, 'for Heaven's sake don't leave me!'

Herbert soothed him and put him in a big chair, with his back to the window; but he would not leave go his hand.

'You don't mind my holding you?' he whispered; 'I was never so upset in my life. The lightning has completely dazed me.'

Even as he spoke a great flame with many tongues was playing among the steel fire-irons on the hearth before him, and the broken old mirror above the mantelpiece—where Alice had gone through so long ago—fell with a crash to the floor.

With his disengaged hand, Herbert threw the hearthrug over the steel things in the fireplace, and pushed the chair away; but still Spurway clung convulsively to his hand. He was a muscular fellow, who could put the weight, or throw the hammer further than any man in Trinity, and the involuntary contraction of his strong hand over Herbert's was like the grip of a vice.

'Oh, Flowers,' he whispered, with his shaking voice, 'is—it—the—the judgment?'

An awful peal of thunder answered him, and drowned Herbert's words—a crackling, rending peal, making, as it were, great fissures in the air; and tongues of forked lightning filled the room—lightning that could be heard as well as seen, and that whizzed by with the peculiar hissing sound of a rocket.

'Oh, I am so unready!' he moaned. 'I have led such a thoughtless life. O Lord, help me!'

Again the blinding flash of the lightning filled the room, and the thunder broke fiercely overhead as if threatening instant destruction.

'Do you think He will, Flowers? Oh, is it too late?'

'If your repentance is real and sincere, it is certainly not too late,' said Herbert.

He could not free his hand, and the inexorable grip held him tighter and tighter, as if his fingers were wedged in an instrument of torture.

'Real? I am awfully sorry for—for my cursed folly. I wish I had never seen that woman. It was her fault more than mine, Flowers.'

The awful voice of the thunder drowned his bitter accusations against the partner in his folly.

'Is there no reparation you can make?'

Herbert made an effort to get his hand free now, but the other clung to it with the tenacity of a dying man.

'Oh, don't leave me, Flowers! I'll do anything you like. I'll tell Lillian all. She'll throw me over, I know; but I won't deceive

her any longer. Oh, Flowers, you don't know what an angel she is !

Herbert smiled, though the lightning was playing round him, and his head was confused with the incessant roar of the thunder. He hadn't seen her sitting beneath the organ-loft of Trinity for three years without finding out what an angel she was, though she might as well have been an angel in heaven as sitting there, for anything she could ever be to him.

'You'll tell her all ?' he repeated gravely.

'I will, indeed ; I swear it ! She thinks it was you, Flowers, but if I live through this I'll tell her——'

Again a deafening roar drowned his words and the oath on his trembling lips.

Before it had subsided the door of Herbert's room opened and Mr. Routh came in.

The force of habit was so strong upon the two undergraduates, that, though the earth beneath them seemed to reel like a drunken man, and the elements around were consuming in the fervent heat of the lightning, they both stood up when the tutor entered the room—but Spurway did not relax his hold.

'Sit down ; pray sit down !' said the tutor, and he came over and sat on the couch beside them.

'I came over,' he explained, when he could be heard at all, 'because I thought, as you were not very strong just now, you might be nervous, Mr. Flowers. It is an awful night. I never remember anything like it.'

'No ?' Herbert said absently.

He was thinking more of that promised revelation on the morrow, and what Lilian Howell would say when she learnt the truth, than of the storm.

'You do not see the extent of it here like we do from my side,' the tutor went on. 'I have left the Dean on his knees praying for the rain. Unless it ceases or the rain comes, something terrible will happen, Professor Smith tells me. He has been up in his observatory all through it, until he could stand it no longer ; the lightning played about his instruments so that he was obliged to desist. I believe he has taken some photographs of it.'

'What would be likely to happen, sir ?' Spurway asked.

'Something very solemn—something for which we are quite unprepared. Professor Smith tells me that he never knew the air so charged with electricity before. If this should continue to increase and the rain does not come, the town will be on fire. All the lower part seemed from my window to be in flames already. I think we should pray at such a moment for all who are in danger and extremity.'

The tutor knelt down, and the men beside him, Spurway still clinging to Herbert's hand.

'I will tell her to-morrow, Flowers, so help me, Heaven ! if I

live through this,' he whispered between his chattering teeth as he knelt beside him.

As the tutor's voice rose low and clear between the peals of thunder, there came an awful discharge overhead like a vast explosion, followed by a prolonged roll and crackling as if the very earth were being curled up like a scroll, and then, following on it like a torrent that had burst its dam, came the wild swoop and rush of the rain.

'Thank God!' said the tutor.

Spurway did not cry out as he had done at former peals, but his hold on Herbert's hand relaxed, and he fell forward on the floor. He had fainted.

When Herbert came out of chapel in the morning, the men were standing about on the steps and in the court with grave faces, discussing the effects of the storm over-night. Awful accounts had been brought in from the country by their gyps and bedmakers of property destroyed, and injuries to buildings and cattle.

Three horses grazing on Midsummer Common had been killed, houses and thatch had been set on fire, church-steeple had been thrown down, lead and slates had been stripped from roofs, windmills and ricks had been burnt down, and trees had been struck all round the country.

Herbert went out in the morning sunshine to see the damage the storm had wrought. The great King's gateway of Trinity was uninjured, and the tower of St. Mary's was in its accustomed place. A hideous grinning gargoyle had been removed from the tower of a neighbouring church.

The Senate-house was in its place, too, and the roof had not been torn off, and the gates were open, and a number of men were crowding up the steps. Herbert pressed up too, at the tail-end of the crowd. 'There must be a new list out,' he remarked to himself, as he took his turn, step by step, in mounting that short momentous flight of steps that has caused more throes of hope and despair than any other flight of its size in the whole world.

'What were the men looking at?' Herbert asked himself impatiently, as he waited in the crowd for his place. He remembered that he hadn't shaved: no more had a great many others on that morning; and, well, if he hadn't, they needn't stare so!

The men coming down were all looking at him, as he waited cool and indifferent in the crowd. Surely he hadn't forgot his collar? No, it was in the right place—he put up his hand to be sure. And his tie? (a very shabby one, dreadfully frayed at the edges). Yes; it was there right enough. What could the men be looking at?

He got a little man in front of him, and looked over his shoulder at the lists affixed to the Senate-house door. The letters all ran together as he looked, or there was a mist before his eyes, or the events of the preceding night had shaken his nerves; but the only

name he could see as he looked down the list was the one at the top. His own—'Flowers, Trinity.'

It was the list of the Classical Tripos.

There was a great thump on his shoulder, and a strong hand was crushing his poor bruised fingers in a hearty grip, and a friendly voice was ringing in his ears :

'Well done, old man! well done!'

Harvard really was scrunching up his fingers beyond all reason, and the tears rose involuntarily to his eyes. Of course it was the agony of his crushed fingers, and not the memory of that green grave at Bideford, that made his eyes suddenly smart as he came down the steps leaning on Harvard's friendly arm.

There was a crowd awaiting him at the bottom, and men pressing round him to shake, as only undergraduates can shake, his poor mangled hand. They nearly wrung it off, and his fingers were tingling to the tips with the agony of his success as he passed beneath the gate of Trinity.

In the court he met Mr. Routh, who shook him most affectionately by the hand—inflicting excruciating torture—and bore him off to the Lodge to receive the congratulations of the Master.

How his foolish heart beat as he passed through the familiar hall into the study beyond, where the great scholar was sitting among his books! There were other things beside musty folios in the library of Trinity Lodge. There was an angel somewhere in a white gown that brightened the dark old room with its presence.

Herbert blushed furiously as Mr. Routh led him proudly in. Surely not at the purblind old Master, who wiped his spectacles, and looked at him kindly out of his dim eyes.

'I am very glad,' he said, with that delightful simplicity that characterized him. 'I am glad for your sake, and for the honour you have brought the college. I congratulate you most heartily, Mr. Flowers! You have well won a distinction second to none I know of. From a child I remember to have looked forward, as the greatest honour that could happen to me on earth, to be a Fellow of Trinity. I think you have done the same; at any rate, you have succeeded. I congratulate you most heartily, and I hope the college will long retain you as one of its members!'

Lilian Howell congratulated the Senior Classic in a few formal words. She gave Herbert, this time, her little cold hand—it didn't occasion him the least agony—but he read in her clear, truthful eyes the same cruel story. They said, as plain as eyes could speak: 'I am dreadfully sorry for you; I am more sorry for you now than ever!'

He met Spurway later in the day, coming blithely out of the Lodge. He had a flower in his button-hole, and a cane in his hand, and delicate kid gloves on his iron fingers. He didn't look scorched or frizzled up by the lightning by any means, and there was no smell of fire on his Bond-Street-cut clothes, but a distinct odour of 'Jockey Club.' The sun was shining, and the sky was perfectly

blue and unclouded above the battlements of Trinity. Every trace of the storm had disappeared off the face of Nature, and off the clean-shaven and faultlessly-moustachioed face of the heir of Bratton.

'Oh, how d'y'e do, Flowers? glad to hear of your success. Thank you awfully for taking me in last night. I must have been struck somehow in crossing the court; I've no recollection whatever what happened after. They tell me the Dean brought me home; it was awfully good of him!'

And so ended Mr. Spurway's confession.

CHAPTER XXXV.

SUCCESS.

'Which of all moments of life brims over with glory supremest?
Sweet, Senior Wrangler and Smith's Prizeman, to pass Double First!'

ON the first day of the May boat-races the lists of the Mathematical Tripos would be out.

Very few men who had entered that great arena of University distinction had slept that night. There was no thunderstorm to keep them awake. Nature, in her most charming mood, had spread the bluest of skies over the gray colleges, and watched with her countless twinkling eyes the uneasy tossings of the honours men. There were not many of them in bed after daylight, and yet there were few who had the courage to press up the steps of the Senate-house and hear the lists read out.

When it came to the last, the very last moment, the culminating point of weeks of anxiety, doubt, and suspense, there were few who could really bear to hear the brutal fact read out by cold, unsympathetic voices. Those who had worked themselves into a fever of excitement and suspense shut themselves in their rooms, and sent their friends on the fateful errand.

Harvard had been working in his usual tremendous Transatlantic way at his second Tripos, hoping to take a small first, he didn't expect a very big one—a senior optime, at any rate—back with him to the States.

'I don't often funk anything,' he said to Herbert the night before; 'but I couldn't stand that reading of the lists. If I failed I should show the white feather, and disgrace the Stars and Stripes.'

He wasn't on the steps when the doors of the Senate-house were thrown open, and the men were crushing in, before nine o'clock the next morning.

There was a dense crowd of University men beneath the gallery from which the lists were read, and the galleries around were crowded with sweet girl-undergraduates of Girton and Newnham.

A sea of upturned faces greeted the appearance of the examiners in the clear space left for them in the centre of the gallery. What clean-shaven, amiable men they were as they smiled blandly down from that serene height, calm and unmoved, upon the eager faces below !

'Time ! time !' the men shouted ; but it was not time for full thirty seconds, as the delightful examiner, with the lists rustling in his hands, saw by his watch. There was a dull roar and a hush as the hand of the clock travelled round to the fateful moment, and the strained expression of gnawing anguish and suspense on the upturned faces grew painfully intense.

The girls in the gallery were clutching at the rail, and some sweet faces grew white, and some wan cheeks grew red, and every eye was bright, and every lip trembled, as the first stroke of nine fell upon their listening ears.

Oh, how many hearts were beating and knees trembling as in a calm, clear, unmoved voice the examiner, 'nicely adjusting his spectacles on his nose, read out the first names on the list !—

'Clark, St. John's, senior wrangler ; Flowers, Trinity, second ; Harvard, Emmanuel, third.'

Such a deafening cheer greeted these announcements that the examiner had to pause and wait for silence, and a Girton girl, who could contain her impatience no longer, beat wildly on the rail, and raised a beseeching hand to the clamorous crowd below.

Herbert heard no more. He was quite sure it was a mistake. The lists were altogether wrong. He only saw the eager young faces around him lengthen and whiten, and the lines deepen as name after name was read out, and the name that each ear was straining for, with, oh ! such an intensity of longing, was still unspoken. A few faces brightened, and here and there a strong man's lip quivered, and a mist rose before eyes unused to tears, and blurred the agreeable countenance of the examiner in the gallery above.

By-and-by, when the lists were read, a sheaf of papers, with the names and places of the successful candidates for University honours, was flung broadcast into the shouting mob below, and a hundred hands were raised to catch them. Herbert secured his prize and hurried off to apprise Harvard of his success—there could be no mistake there, at any rate.

The steps of the Senate-house were so crowded, and there were so many delays in getting out, that he had to wait and take his turn. There was so much shaking of hands going on, and such congratulatory slaps on the back, and such shouting and cheering from the crowd of University men outside, that his progress was a

very slow one ; and Harvard all this time was enduring agonies of suspense.

Place aux dîmes ! Again he had to fall back ; the Newnham and Girton girls were crowding down the gallery-stairs. Such a bevy of blue-stockings, and, oh, such a flutter of timid hearts !—timid, alas ! no longer. Girton had secured a wrangler and a brace of senior optimes, and Newnham had carried off seven honours.

It was quite easy to pick out the girls who had won from the girls who had failed : while these were smiling bravely, the happy few were flushed and tearful—oh, such proud, happy tears !

It seemed such a mean thing to Herbert to tell Harvard he had beaten him by a place.

‘My dear old fellow, you have done splendidly !’ he parted, flying headlong into Harvard’s room with the list in his hand ; ‘but there is some wretched mistake here : they have put me before you.’

‘It’s right enough, old man,’ said Harvard, running his eye rapidly down the list. ‘You are in your right place, but I’m not in mine. If I had come in at the end, it was as much as I could expect. My tutor vowed I should have a third if I didn’t give up Barnwell and the night-school and stick to my work, but thank God I didn’t.’

‘You’ll be a Fellow of your college, Jack,’ said Herbert, surveying him with undisguised admiration, and speaking out of the simple fulness of his heart. ‘Emmanuel ’ll never let you go back ; she doesn’t often get a double-first. You’ll have to stay here now ; I can’t tell you how glad I am.’

‘If they offer me a Fellowship,’ said Harvard modestly, ‘I should certainly accept it ; but my work here is finished. There’s a wider field than Barnwell waiting for me out there. There is not a prouder distinction in the whole world that I could take back to dear old Cambridge than to be a Fellow of Emmanuel, except, indeed, to be the best half-back in the ‘Varsity.’

There was a great grasping of hands when Herbert got back to Trinity ; he could bear it better now. He had got accustomed to success. Men forgot his highlows and his frayed jacket ; they had ceased even to observe the baggy knees of his trousers as they congratulated him on the honour and distinction he had won. Grave old senior Fellows to whom he had looked up with nothing short of reverence during his undergraduate days, came up and shook hands with him in Hall, and said the nicest things in their grave, courtly manner, with the whole table looking on.

Everybody congratulated him with smiling lips, but nobody was very much moved by his success. Not an eye had grown dim, not a lip had quivered, in all these formal congratulations, and not a single kind voice had faltered a broken ‘God bless you !’ except—except, indeed, his bedmaker’s.

Her frouzy old bonnet was awry, and her broom was in her hand, as she stood in the early morning, in the centre of a knot of bedmakers and brooms, in the Great Court, flaunting Herbert's success over the head of a virago who waited upon a duke.

'My gentleman's a-beat all yourn holler!' she was saying proudly. 'Lords and dooks, indeed! There are plenty of they sort about here, but when it comes to learnin' they can't hold a candle to him! See what he's a-gone through before you talks of yer lords and dooks—took two 'Tripuses an' lost his dear mar all in a year, and not a single soul in the whole world left, when he comes out first, to say, "God bless him!"'

The bedmaker shouldered her broom, and blew her nose, as she went her way, with such emphasis that it could be heard the other end of the court.

Everybody had friends coming up to the May boat-races or the degrees. There never had been such a gay May Week. The Great Court was crowded all day with men surrounded by the friends to whom they were expounding the glories and greatness of their college. The chapel was full of visitors; the hall was thronged with fluttering female forms, hovering round the tables, sitting in the Master's grand chair, admiring the portraits on the walls, going into ecstasies over the lovely Reynolds bequeathed by the Duchess of Gloucester. Herbert could see them from his window going in and coming out. It seemed to him in his loneliness that everybody had people coming up this May Week but himself.

The Lodge was full of visitors, and he recognised among them in the stalls in chapel Lady Millicent and Muriel Spurway. He took his cap off gravely to her as he came out, but her ladyship didn't happen to look his way. She had come up to see the heir of Bratton take his degree, a Poll degree, and near the bottom of the list; but it had been proclaimed in print in the *Bideford Chronicle* with a suitable flourish of trumpets.

He quite understood Lady Millicent's attitude, and he could not blame her for it. Was not Julie still occupying his mother's cottage at Bideford? It was Lucy's wish. She had been too weak to enter into any explanation, but she had wished it, and her wish was law; and he remembered, as Lady Millicent swept by, the construction she had doubtless put upon it.

The next morning Harvard, in his impetuous way, burst into his room.

'I say, old man, the heiress is coming down to see you take your degree! I do believe she is keen on you.'

Herbert didn't blush this time, but he turned a shade pale. 'I thought it was you,' he was going to say, but he checked himself in time.

'She is very fond of Cambridge,' he said quietly; 'she loves it for Geraint's sake.'

The May races were now over—Herbert had no longer any

interest in them—and the procession of the flower-crowned boats had attracted every soul in Cambridge to the banks of the Cam. The leafy, leafy Backs, the beautiful bridges, the shady Fellows' gardens, the sweeping meadows, were crowded with the youth and beauty, not of Cambridge only, but of every county in England. The boats that had come down the river with long, sweeping strokes 'eased' as they passed the crowded banks, and drifted in calm majesty to their place, the dark-blue of Second Trinity taking the lead, followed by the scarlet of Lady Margaret, the black and white of Trinity Hall, the red of Jesus.

Herbert waited on the bridge of King's while the eights rowed past, with their waving flags and their floral crowns, and returned in order, lying side by side in line across the river. He remembered as he stood there, how Geraint and he had pulled together in that first boat, where the men, Spurway among them, were sitting modestly down, while every man in every boat along the line, lifting their oars in the air, cheered them with all the generous fervour of lusty undergraduate lungs. And in the midst of the cheering the band struck up, 'For he's a jolly good fellow!' and a thousand voices joined in the hearty chorus.

Herbert could stand it no longer. The memory of that sad day when the shouts of the crowd were in his ears, and that noble face was whitening on his knee, rose up before him, and he turned away from the sight, and strode moodily over the fields to Grantchester.

The shouts of the crowd were still ringing in his ears as he swung open the gate of the little green churchyard:

'For he's a jolly good fellow!'

He repeated it to himself involuntarily as he walked among the graves, pushing back the trailing boughs of briar-roses and hawthorn that swung across the path. It was a wild unkempt churchyard, and the grave he sought was in the older portion, beneath the shadow of the chancel, and it was already overgrown with weeds and flowers.

As he stood beside it, repeating the words that were ringing in his ears, and telling the story of his loneliness to the quiet sleeper beneath, a figure emerged from the surrounding greenery. He heard the rustle of a woman's dress across the grass and he looked up. It was Mary Barclay.

He started involuntarily when he saw her. His nerves were unstrung by the events of the last few days.

'I am so glad to meet you here,' she said, reaching out her hand to him across Geraint's grave. 'I have wanted so much to congratulate you, Mr. Flowers. Surely there could not be a more fitting place.'

Herbert bowed his head gravely. Hers were the first woman's lips that had trembled when they uttered their formal congratulations.

'I am so glad,' she went on hurriedly, 'for your sake, and for his. In his name, as well as my own, I congratulate you most sincerely. Did I not tell you that there was a great future before you—that you would be a Fellow of Trinity? Oh, how much more you may be rests with yourself. You have borne your poverty so nobly, that wealth and distinction will not spoil you.'

'Wealth?' he repeated with a smile. 'The wealth of a Fellow is never very great, and it may be years before I can be elected to a Fellowship. I shall have to earn my living by taking pupils.'

'Not necessarily,' she said, still in that hurried tone that was unusual to her.

He looked across the grave at her in some surprise; she was twisting her ungloved hands together nervously, and as he caught the gleam of the diamonds on her fingers, he suddenly recalled that strange scene in Marylebone, and remembered what strong, earnest hands they were. Surely there must be some hidden meaning in her words?

'Quite necessarily,' he answered gravely.

'Oh, Mr. Flowers, there are other things in the world beside college Fellowships worth winning! Surely that is but a stepping-stone to higher things? Wealth, with the power and influence it brings; position, fame, usefulness, love—are not these worth winning?'

How beautiful she was, as she stood there with the red sunset light on her pale face and her noble figure, like Providence with her hands full of gifts, reaching them out to him across Geraint's grave!

He smiled sadly.

'To some men,' he said slowly, and with a touch of bitterness in the tone, 'they represent the highest good; but to me,' and he looked back across the Grantchester meadows to the gray towers of Cambridge in the distance, 'my place is here.'

'And why not to you?' she said; her lip quivered as she spoke, and her pale cheeks flushed. 'They were his once,' and she looked down at the mound at her feet; 'and he loved you—and—and for his sake, and the love you bore him, they are yours, if you will accept them, Mr. Flowers, at the hand of a woman.'

Herbert could not affect to misunderstand her; but his face hardened, and instead of blushing in his usual absurd fashion, he turned white to the lips, but he could find no words to answer her.

'Oh, Mr. Flowers, I am doing a shameful thing; but I am sure that he would have it so. How am I to speak more plainly? I cannot find the words.'

Herbert pitied her from his heart, but he could not help her out with a single word, and his white face was set like a flint, while Mary Barclay was flushed and tearful.

The choir were practising in the low village church, and the voices of the singers, as they floated out into the summer night,

broke the silence, and the wood-pigeons were cooing in the elm-trees above, and a sad low breeze of evening swept through the yard, and shook the petals of the briar-roses down upon the graves. Herbert remembered all these sights and sounds long after, but he dared not look upon the pleading face of the woman by his side. A few months ago it would have been different; but now there was no one but himself, and his cup was already full to the brim.

She was weeping softly, and her tears were falling down on Geraint's grave. He offered her his arm, and he led her through the narrow moss-grown path among the lichen covered tombs until she recovered herself.

'All that I have would have been his,' she said presently in a broken voice, clinging to his arm with her warm tremulous fingers; 'will you fill his place, Mr. Flowers?'

How could he answer her?

'I could never fill his place,' he said sadly, bending over her. 'He was so brave, and generous, and noble; and I—I am only a poor scholar; and I have chosen my lonely life.'

'And your choice is irrevocable?' she said softly; and her hand trembled on his arm.

'It is quite irrevocable,' he answered gravely.

The wind swept through the churchyard and died sighing away among the graves; the wood-pigeons were silent, and the voices of the choir rose in a sad, plaintive chant; the dusk was falling over the graves and the dimly-lighted church, as Herbert led Mary Barclay to the carriage that was waiting for her at the gate.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

NEMESIS.

'I hear a chirp of birds; I see
A light-blue lane of early dawn.

AN old-fashioned June morning fitly ushered in the Day of Degrees. 'Blue above lane and wall; blue over the chapel of King's; blue over the hall of Trinity; blue over the pinnacled tower of St. Mary's; blue, deeply blue, over the storied urns on the Senate-house, and the green of the cloistered courts, and the bridges, and the drooping picturesque willows, and the winding river that caught and reflected back the blue of the sky.

Herbert had to call upon the Dean in the morning of the blue day to settle some preliminaries, and the Dean looked him over with a critical eye before he presented himself in the Senate-house. A great many critical eyes would look him over by-and-by, when he represented the highest distinction won by Trinity.

A snowy B.A. hood covered his shabby gown, and spotless hands concealed his frayed linen. His trousers were decidedly baggy and shiny at the knees—the Dean didn't object to that—and, oh, his cap was that limp and disreputable at the corners that the credit of Trinity was at stake!

It was full late to go in quest of a new one, and the Dean went into an inner room and brought out one of his own; not by any means a new one, but straight and severe, with the corners intact, and the tassel entire and depending in scholarly fashion over his nose.

'If you will wear this, Mr. Flowers, it is more respectable than your own, and I am sure you will not mind accepting it.'

'I will wear it with the greatest pride and pleasure,' said Herbert; 'I shall take it as a good omen.'

The floor of the Senate-house was crowded; but Herbert looked in vain for any kind face among the well-dressed crowd that would brighten at his great success. He was tired already of being complimented and stared at. He would have exchanged all his honours with the man who took the lowest place, and had his proud, happy people and the girl he loved, there in the front row, smiling upon him. He recalled his first speech-day at the old school, with the little mother waving her pocket-handkerchief, as he rose from his knees a Bachelor of Arts, amid the deafening cheers of the undergraduates in the gallery.

The Vice-Chancellor shook hands with him, and other august personages in scarlet robes congratulated him on his great success. Lilian Howell was there, with the people of her betrothed, in the front row; but she only vouchsafed him one look as he rose, grave and deeply moved, from his knees, with the solemn words of the Vice-Chancellor ringing in his ears: '*In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti.*' And that look said plainer than any words, 'I am more sorry for you than ever!'

The blue June day had worn itself out, and the courts were deserted, and Herbert was walking alone after Hall in the Backs. The colours of the bright day were deepening, and the shadows lengthening, as it drew to its close, and the walls of the old colleges were glowing redder and yellower as the sun went down. But Herbert saw none of these. He was eating the Dead Sea fruit he had toiled so hard to win.

Success with none to share it was less enviable than failure with kind hands to soften it. He had never felt his desolation so completely as he felt it to-night, when Fortune had poured her best gifts into his lap, and he had turned away from her with the same cry on his lips as the Preacher of old: '*O vanitas vanitatum!*'

Had he done well, he asked himself, in rejecting the love and sympathy that Mary Barclay had offered him? If it had not been so heavily weighted with that intolerable burden of wealth, unto which he certainly was not born, he might have hesitated; but as it

was, he had no alternative. He had borne the galling chain of poverty so long, and grown so accustomed to it, that he would not barter it for the golden fetters of wealth. Besides, had it even been possible for the sake of others, it had come too late!

Herbert stood on the bridge of Trinity, looking gloomily down into the dark water; he did not care to go back to his rooms, for there was a great party at the Lodge, and the court was crowded with people arriving. He was in no mood for festivities, least of all for festivities beneath the roof of Trinity Lodge. It was the first occasion since the death of the Master's wife; and the engagement of the Master's niece had been announced, and, doubtless, she was receiving all the world's congratulations.

As he stood there, with the red sun sinking behind the trees, and flecking the dark water with splashes of crimson light, he heard his name spoken by an unfamiliar voice; and he looked hurriedly up, and Julie stood before him.

Her face was soiled and worn no longer, and her fringe was in its accustomed place, and she was showily dressed; but there was a look in her dark eyes that Herbert had never seen there before.

She wore a short veil over the fringe, and the rouge, and the little kiss-me-quick curls; but beneath it her eyes, always brilliant and sparkling, shone like living coals; and Herbert noticed that her thin red lips, as she spoke, twitched painfully.

'You here? Oh, Julie!'

He was thinking of Lillian Howell, and the dismay that her presence at this moment would cause.

'And why not? I have "waited a minit," and my time has come. I have wait until he has taken his degree; I have not trouble him at all; I have not disturb his mind. I have let him win his honour—and I am come to share it!'

The flame in her dark eyes leaped up into a blaze as she spoke; and Herbert felt his heart sink within him.

Oh, Lillian, Lillian!

'To share it? What do you mean, Julie? Do you know his mother and his sister are here?' he asked her sternly.

She gave a low laugh, and her thin scarlet lips curled themselves scornfully; and there was a gleam of unmistakable triumph in her eyes.

'I know they are here, and that is why I have come. I wish to share the honour, the distinction, with them. I have wait long for this minit!'

'Oh, Julie, you are mad!' he said. 'You cannot possibly go there. You do not know all. You must not be seen here—indeed you must not. I will see Spurway, and tell him anything you wish; but you must go away at once. If the Proctors see you here, you will be removed. Oh, you do not know what risks you are running by being here, after being once warned!'

He was terribly in earnest. If this woman were caught here, in her excited state, what scandal and confusion it would cause!

'I defy your Proctors! I defy your Spinning-house!' she exclaimed, turning quite livid with passion. 'They have threaten to take me there once; they have insult me, and I have not complain. I have wait a minit. They will not threaten me now. I shall see them, maybe at the Lodge, and tell them I have come to dinner!'

'But, Julie, surely you are not going there? There is a party to-night; wait, at any rate, until the morning.'

He hardly knew what he said, he was so anxious to detain her and gain time.

'That is why I am going to-night,' she said, with a gleam of triumph in her eyes. 'He is there, with his dainty miss and her friends, and my lady, and I am going before them all—to claim my husband.'

'Your husband!' Herbert repeated faintly, and his own voice sounded very far away in his ears.

'My husband—my lawful husband!' she repeated in a tone of triumph, and her dark eyes glittered like baleful lightning. 'You did not think I was so poor a fool as to be taken in with a sham marriage!' she said scornfully. 'I had got a license before I meet him in Cambridge, and Mr. Grinley's friend, who was in orders, though he did not know it, perform the ceremony. He thought to ruin a poor girl with a sham marriage, and cast her off like an old shoe when he was tired of her; but he reckoned without Julie!' and she gave a little shrug of her expressive shoulders.

'Have you any proof of this?' Herbert asked sternly. He was thinking of Lilian, and how to spare her this intolerable shame and agony.

'Oh yes, I have proof and witnesses. It was registered here, and there is Mr. Grinley and the clergyman.'

Herbert felt the bridge was going round with him, and the river and the Backs and Trinity library were getting mixed up.

'Oh, spare her to-night!' he said when he could say anything. 'Let—let this awful revelation wait till to-morrow. She is so innocent and happy, and it would kill her. Oh, Julie, if you have any mercy, wait till to-morrow!'

'If I have any mercy!' she repeated with a low cruel laugh that went shuddering away down the avenue among the trees. 'What mercy would she show me? No, Herbert Flowers, I have wait for this minit all my life!'

She left him standing there powerless to detain her, with an inflexible purpose in her shining eyes. He watched this terrible Nemesis cross the bridge and pass beneath the archway of Neville's Court, and when he turned again to look at the river the flame of the sunset had died out, but the dark waters were still flecked with great drops of blood.

'Oh, Lilian, Lilian!'

He hadn't the heart to go back to his rooms until it was quite dark. He stayed out till the college-gates on the river side were closed for the night, and he went round by the road and came in by the great gate of Trinity, which was thrown wide open, and the company from the Lodge, that he had left going in, were pouring out and driving away in flys and hired carriages. There was an unusual amount of confusion, as if the party had broken up hastily before its time, and cabs and hansoms were at a premium.

As Herbert crossed the Court he noticed the men standing about in groups. The college servants and cooks, in their white caps, contrary to custom, were gathered in knots, and a crowd hung round the entrance to Neville's Court. He remembered, with a horrible misgiving at his heart, that Spurway's rooms were ~~there~~, and in a moment it dawned upon him that Julie was making a scene.

He hurried past the groups to his own staircase; he could not bear to ask a question. He sat down in the dark with his face in his hands, thinking of the misery that had fallen on the woman he loved. He never knew how long he had sat there, but he was roused suddenly by a knock at his door, and Mr. Routh entered.

'Are you here, Flowers?' he asked hurriedly, standing in the doorway, and peering into the darkened room.

'Yes, sir, I am here; has anything happened?'

'What! have you not heard?'

'No, indeed, I have heard nothing. I have just come in.'

'Oh, how can I tell you?' the tutor answered, his voice sinking to a tone of reluctant horror. 'There has been an awful scene here with—with that woman, and—and Spurway has blown his brains out!'

'Good heavens!' exclaimed Herbert, and he sank back in his chair.

'It appears that woman had some claim upon him, and she enforced it at an awkward moment. She broke in, indeed, upon the company assembled at the Lodge and demanded to see her husband. The servants couldn't get her away, and the poor fellow left the place with her, and she followed him to his rooms.. What happened there God only knows, but soon after she was screaming like a mad woman for help, and when help came it was too late!'

'And Miss Howell?' said Herbert.

How his voice shook! he scarcely recognised it for his own.

'Oh, Miss Howell; she is behaving like an angel! She is comforting the poor, frenzied mother as if she were her daughter indeed.'

'When did this happen?' Herbert asked.

'Not an hour ago. I have just come from there: the scene is too awful to think upon; but we can't get the wretched woman who has caused all this trouble out of the room. She claims her right to stay with him, and nothing but force will move her.'

‘And Spurway?’

‘Oh, he is quite dead, and she will not leave the body! but it is impossible for her to remain. Do you think you could have any influence with her? Will you come over and try to get her quietly away?’

Herbert went over reluctantly enough; but for the sake of Lillian Howell he undertook the thankless, miserable errand.

The door of the room was open, and a number of men, the Dean among them, were bending over a woman who was crouching on the floor, and vainly trying to raise her. On a couch by her side, a sheet covered, but not concealed, the rigid outline of the figure that lay beneath. There was blood on the sheet, and on the floor, and on the woman’s dress, and her hand; and she sat silent and still, and deaf to all entreaties to move.

Her face was deadly white, and so contorted by a look of awful terror as to be scarcely recognisable for Julie.

She sat motionless beside the couch, her dark eyes fixed with a look of unutterable horror at the dreary outline of the figure beneath the sheet; but she paid no heed to the entreaties of the men about her to leave the awful spot.

Herbert stood for a moment on the threshold paralyzed by the strange sight; then he stepped firmly into the room, and, pressing through the crowd, took the girl by the arm and raised her from her sitting position in spite of herself.

‘Come away, Julie; come away!’ he said sternly. ‘This is no place for you. You have done mischief enough already!’

The woman clung to his arm in a panic of abject fear.

‘It was he himself who did it, not me. Oh no, indeed it was not me. I thought he only threatened to frighten me, and I laughed at him, and told him he was too much a coward to do it, and oh, mon Dieu! he did it on the moment, and he fell at my feet there, and his blood is all over me!’

She shuddered as she spoke, and drew her dress away from the contact with a pool of blood on the floor. Her face was ghastly white beneath the rouge, and her scarlet lips were quite livid.

‘Come away,’ said Herbert sternly, not heeding her wild, incoherent talk, and drawing her almost roughly with his inexorable hand through the crowd; ‘come away; I tell you this is no place for you!’

She left the room on his arm cowed like a beaten dog. He drew her silently through the court, and beneath the gate, and hurried her through the dusky street. He was thankful for the darkness that covered her; he was thankful to have her there on his arm, and to drag her with his swift, remorseless steps farther and farther away from that pure soul whose happiness she had blighted.

He did not speak once to her all the way, but she babbled on excusing herself, and bewailing the awful act to which she had driven the unhappy man, in incoherent words.

'He was mad ; he was wild with passion !' she explained in her incoherent way. 'They called him down into a room, away from the company—they would not let me go in ; and while I talked to him my lady came in with her proud face and her scornful eyes, and I up and told her I was as good as she now ; that I had wait a minit—that I should be my Lady Spurway myself some day ; and—and—he swore at me, and told me to hold my tongue, and took me out of the house to his rooms—and I showed him the papers, and told him how Mr. Grinley had stood my friend, and brought a real parson, and not a sham one ; and he swore a great oath, and cursed Mr. Grinley, and cursed me, and vowed if I did not give up my claim upon him he would shoot himself. He offered to buy me off !—me, who had waited so long ! Ah, he did not know Julie ! I laughed at him ; I knew he was a coward, and—oh, mon Dieu ! he took me at my word—and he fired !'

The woman was shuddering in every limb when Herbert took her into the Bull Hotel. He gave her into the hands of the chambermaid ; and then he remembered with what fidelity and tenderness she had watched beside the dying-bed of his mother, and he explained to the woman that she had had a terrible shock, and begged her to look after her.

Herbert was so shaken by the events of the week that, having nowhere else in particular to go to, he went up to town, and spent the first few weeks of the long vacation with Jayne at the Camberwell Mission. Lady Millicent, when the inquest was over, had taken the body of her son back to Bratton, where it was interred with much funereal pomp, in the stately tomb of his ancestors at Bideford. An uninvited mourner, in the deepest of weeds, had been present at the funeral, and after the ceremony had come up to the house, by the front door, and made her claim for recognition by the family as the legally wedded wife of the late heir of Bratton. It was a stormy interview, in spite of the solemnity of the occasion, and whatever compromises were made—and the deeply beweeded mourner went away smiling behind her veil—Julie never again darkened the doors of Bratton Court.

Jayne had been ordained to a curacy in the neighbourhood of Camberwell, and he still kept on his rooms and his work at the mission. Harvard had also come up, to get his hand in, as he termed it, to home mission work on an extensive scale, before he returned to the States.

It did Herbert good hammering about the narrow streets and markets of Camberwell with these kindred souls. The atmosphere, close and heated as it was in the breathless July weather, was purer and clearer than the atmosphere he had left behind at Trinity, tainted by that horrible tragedy. Nobody in Camberwell was very much surprised at the result. No good could by any possibility have come of such a shameful *mésalliance*.

'Madam Jezebel 'll have her turn yet,' said Harvard, with his accustomed metaphor, 'or there are no snakes!'

Herbert learnt a great deal in those few weeks at the mission. He learnt that this strange race that he worked among, that were steeped to the lips in wretchedness and ignorance, had very true and warm human hearts, and had exactly the same feelings as himself. He found out very soon that with a little sympathy and a little help they would be enabled to live very true and honest artisan lives, and lift their heads above the low clouded atmosphere of poverty and distress.

'If I were staying here,' said Harvard one day, emerging from a frozy court, where a number of sturdy young fellows were lounging about out of work, 'I should start a barrow-mission.'

'A barrow-mission?' Jayne repeated; he had always got his eyes and his ears open for suggestions.

'Yes,' said Harvard, 'I would let out barrows in any number to these fellows; and I would set them up with a small loan or gift, enough to stock them, and put them in the way of independence, at any rate.'

'They would never repay the loan,' said Herbert moodily—he hadn't much faith in the people; the men of Trinity hadn't made the acquaintance of the masses until the mission was started. All honour to the mission!—'They would get drunk the first day upon the proceeds, and most likely sell the barrows.'

'No, no, no!' Jayne interrupted quite excitedly. 'They would do nothing of the kind. Wait until you have lived among the people so long as I have, Flowers, and seen them in their own homes, before you make such a cruel—forgive me for saying so—such an unjust assertion. I will give you an instance in my own experience. Not long ago I was walking in a very crowded thoroughfare with a friend, a Trinity man, who had once been a curate about here, but had left the parish for some years, and, being in town, was staying with me a few days at the mission. While we were talking, a cart drove up, and a man, well dressed and with a very cheerful face, jumped out and rushed up to my friend, and began shaking him wildly by the hand.

"I don't remember you," said my friend, still shaking him by the hand.

"Oh yes, you do, sir," said the other. "I'm Jem Smith, that you helped with the loan of five shillings to buy a sack of potatoes with when I was starving and broke down. I got a barrow and sold them all out in the day, and brought you back the money at night; but you wouldn't take it, sir—no, that you wouldn't. You sent me back to buy some more, and I brought it back night after night till I didn't want it no longer, and then you lent it to another man. That five shillings of yours, sir, was the luckiest five shillings I ever had in my life. I've got three shops now, and a horse and cart" (and a very fine horse and cart it was, too), "and a good

home for the missis and the children ; and we've all got to thank you for it. Not remember me, sir ! Why, I'd know you among a thousand ! I humbly thank you again, sir, and—God bless you !”

‘My friend was very much moved, but he only said, “God bless you, Jem Smith !” and wrung his hand. The people round stared at us, for we all had tears in our eyes, and were blowing our noses like great schoolboys. Not trust the people indeed !’

Jayne made a note of Harvard's suggestion. He made many notes of useful schemes, which a little bird carried to a certain house in a West-End park, which Herbert was surprised to hear was being dismantled. Mary Barclay was going abroad, and the great house was to be let. But the work was to go on the same during her absence in the hands of this wise almoner of her bounty. As many public-houses as he could get the lease of, Jayne had already shut up and turned into coffee-palaces. But Mary Barclay's philanthropy did not end in coffee and buns.

Passing through the rooms of an infirmary in the neighbourhood of the mission, Jayne pointed out to Herbert a new ward, with the name recently painted up in bright red letters above the door, ‘The Ruby Ward.’

As they walked homeward, Jayne told him the touching story connected with it.

‘You remember that packet, Flowers, you sent up to be given to the strange nurse who fainted after the operation that night when Miss Barclay was there ?’

‘Yes,’ said Herbert. ‘The packet was hers ; it had been entrusted to me.’

‘Well, the day after I sent it to the Home where she belonged ; it was brought back to me with a note from Sister Ursula, the name by which she was known. The Sister who brought it told me that she had been removed, by her own wish, to a Home in the East-End, where the work was heavier and much more trying. The packet contained, as you doubtless know, some valuable jewels, and the note begged that they might be sold for some charitable purpose connected with the Trinity Mission. I could not go through London selling rubies, so I packed them up with the letter, and sent them to Miss Barclay.’

‘To Mary Barclay !’ Herbert interrupted. ‘Oh, Jayne, you don't know who this woman was ?’

‘No, my dear fellow ; how should I ?’ And then he saw a strange look in Herbert's face. ‘You don't—really—mean——’ he stammered, the light beginning to dawn upon him.

‘I do indeed. She was the woman that you prayed that Geraint should be prevented from marrying.’

‘God bless me !’ said Jayne simply ; ‘and did Miss Barclay know it ?’

‘She will never know it,’ said Herbert, ‘unless you tell her. But what did she do about the rubies ?’

'She kept them herself, and sent me five hundred pounds for them. With this we have built a ward in the infirmary for sick children—it was a woman's gift, remember—and we have called it "The Ruby Ward."'

Some days after this Herbert happened, while walking aimlessly in the West-End on a broiling afternoon, to step into the auction rooms of Messrs. Christie, Manson and Woods, merely, indeed, to get out of the sun, when in walking through their great galleries his eye rested on a little Chelsea figure that he thought he had seen before.

It was only a little brown-eyed Chelsea Cupid. There are thousands of others like it in the world, but Herbert stopped before it as if there were no other, and greeted it as if it were an old acquaintance. He could not mistake it, as it stood there in the sunlight alone—its fellow was on his mantelpiece at Trinity. And then, when he looked round upon all the costly china and pictures and furniture that crowded these great rooms, he suddenly remembered where he had seen it all last, and the pale face of its fair owner rose up before him—not as he had seen it proudly among these, but as he last saw it in the sunset-light across Geraint's grave.

The Rubens from the great dining-room, the Guidos, the Van Dycks, were looking down upon him from their great gilded frames as they had looked at him on that first day when his iron heels made such a dreadful noise on the marble floor.

The door of the office was open, and a clerk was standing there disengaged, and Herbert went up to the counter and asked for a catalogue.

'I don't know whether I am justified in asking the question,' he said modestly, 'but would you mind telling me the name of the lady to whom these things belong?'

'I don't think it is any secret,' the clerk replied, 'though the name does not appear on the catalogue. They are the property of a Miss Barclay, and are sold for some charitable purpose.'

Jayne knew all about it, of course. The charitable object had been his own pet project. Mary Barclay was selling the luxurious *lares et penates* of her youth for the establishment and endowment of an industrial Home at the East-End.

'That woman's about hit the right nail on the head,' said Harvard approvingly, when he heard the story; 'she's giving the people a chance of helping themselves, any way. If she'd only get rid of that cursed pile, I'd marry her myself!'

'Now, really, would you, Jack?' said Jayne, his kind old face beaming across the teapot, as he filled Harvard's cup to the brim. 'I don't think you'll have very long to wait.'

CHAPTER XXXVII.

A FELLOW OF TRINITY.

'Oh, ye wise ! we arise out of failures, dreams, disasters ;
We arise to be your masters.'

HERBERT was back again at Trinity. He wore a long B.A. gown now, with ribbons on it, that he made no attempt to hide, and a fur hood over his surplice, and sat in great dignity in the Bachelors' seats in chapel, and at the Fellows' table in Hall.

He was a Fellow of Trinity !

He sat at the high table now, and the grave portraits of the founders and the illustrious dead looked down upon him approvingly.

The ardours, the sorrows, the struggles of the race, were all over ; only the brilliant achievement remained. The great cloud of witenesses that looked down from those old rafters overhead upon those who feasted there had never approved a more nobly earned success in the rich intellectual history of the past of Trinity.

He wore his honours as he had worn his misfortunes, with becoming modesty, and was warmly welcomed by the grave, scholarly old Fellows who sat round the great horseshoe table in the Combination Room.

Perhaps he never quite realized until he sat there, on that first night of his Fellowship after Hall, mute and wondering, enjoying the walnuts and the wine—and all that the walnuts and the wine round that horseshoe table represented of scholarly and philosophical learning and culture—how great had been his success !

He had received the appointment of lecturer on the classical side, and had already as many private pupils as he could take. His spare furniture had been removed to a noble suite of Fellow's rooms in the Cloister Court. The worn, faded bit of carpet was there beside his bed—it looked terribly out of place, but he wouldn't have exchanged it for the finest rug from the looms of Persia—and his old narrow shaving-glass, that had so often reflected his sorrowful face, and the book-shelves with the dear old musty classics in their shabby bindings, and the old coach's silver inkstand in a place of honour, with the inscription well brushed up.

The two little Chelsea Cupids—the dear little man that he had wept over in his childhood, and Mary Barclay's gift—stood side by side, and were the presiding *lares et penates* of his lonely hearth. The ladies of the ballet, and the pets of the ring, with many other reminiscences of his undergraduate days, were now adorning his old bedmaker's best parlour ; but the bishops and divines were

hanging on his panelled walls, and gave a scholarly air to his bare rooms.

During his first term of residence in Cloister Court he had received a brief letter from Lilian Howell. It consisted of a few meagre lines, begging his forgiveness for the cruel injustice she had done him for so many months—and nothing more.

He replied as briefly, freely and frankly forgiving the unfounded suspicions and misunderstandings that had blighted his life—and nothing more.

Another niece was keeping house for the Master of Trinity, and Lilian Howell was living abroad. For two whole weary years she never appeared in the courts of Trinity; and when, in the third year, she reappeared at intervals in a nurse's garb, as an occasional visitor at the Lodge, there were few men left in Trinity who remembered her sad story.

A great deal had happened during these two years. Mr. Routh, who had always remained Herbert's kindest and wisest friend, had had a paralytic seizure, and Herbert was acting as his deputy. He had also been ordained meanwhile. It had not been his intention to enter the Church, but his kind old tutor had pressed it upon him.

'One never knows what may happen,' he said one day, in talking to Herbert about the future. 'The unexpected, as a rule, does happen, but it is always as well to be prepared. I think it would be a wise step, and certainly it would be a safe one, to enter the Church; and you have no conscientious scruples?'

'No, thank God!' said Herbert humbly; and so he was ordained.

Jayne had come up for his M.A. degree meanwhile. He was vicar now in the parish where he was formerly curate, and he was still working hard at the mission.

Brown had done great things in a fresh field of missionary enterprise in Africa, and there was some talk of founding a new colonial bishopric. The cause had spread with the rapidity and astonishing results of the old Apostolic days. Perhaps in the fiery zeal of the humble son of Trinity, there was something of the Apostolic ardour of the men of old, who held not their lives dear, but counted all things but dross in comparison with the blessedness of their Master's service.

Harvard had returned to the States, a pioneer of the great wave of muscular Christianity that has spread from one end of the Western Continent to the other. He is still the best half-back in the States, and the champion oar of Harvard; and his athletic friends admit that he hits out as straight from the shoulder in the pulpit as he does in the ring—which is admitting a great deal.

He has left a record behind him in the old country—a record, we will hope an enduring one—with which his name will ever be associated. Not in the gold-embazoned roll of the *Honoris Causâ* of Emmanuel College, not in the stirring records of the Cambridge

University Athletic Club, not in the reports of the Union debates, though in all these he had won distinction. Who can ever predict which of all the acts of a useful, many-sided life will be longest remembered—will survive the rest?

The barrow mission that he suggested to Jayne, on a steaming hot July day in the slums of London, is now an accomplished fact, and in order to perpetuate the name of its originator it is called 'The Harvard Mission.'

During his last long vacation abroad—and Herbert spent much of his leisure time now on the Continent—he had come across an old friend most unexpectedly. It was in the crowded Casino at Monte Carlo. A woman with dark hair and expressive shoulders was playing at one of the tables. Herbert thought he knew the fringe; but her back was towards him, and a faint odour of patchouli was in his nostrils.

In a moment the old schoolroom at Bratton rose up before him: the tired little mother, the unruly children, and the pretty *gouvernante* down at heel. The lady, with a naïve shrug of her expressive shoulders, which were already too much *en évidence*, drew in her winnings, and Herbert's near neighbour gave an impatient 'pshaw!' as the croupier gathered in his stakes.

'That woman has the devil's luck!' he said impatiently.

'Who is she?' Herbert asked carelessly.

'Oh, Madame Grinley; there is some collusion between her and the croupier, I am sure.'

And the man who had lost his money went out of the room cursing his folly.

'Madame Grinley!' Herbert repeated to himself, as he loitered slowly round the table watching the players. The croupier's inexorable rake gathered in the stakes, and still the silly lambkins crowded round the table eager to be fleeced. Herbert's honest eyes followed the rake home. The croupier was so absorbed in the game that he did not see him. Herbert caught the fiery gleam of a great opal on the white fingers that mechanically drew in the rake, and he raised his eyes to the man's face.

The croupier was Mr. Grinley.

Herbert hurried out of the room; he had no wish to renew that long-forgotten acquaintance. He had to pass on the other side of the table, and as he came opposite the fair winner of the stakes, who had been pointed out to him as Madame Grinley, he involuntarily looked across the table. The lady looked up at the same moment, and beneath the well-remembered fringe he encountered the shining dark eyes of Julie.

During that third year Mr. Routh failed visibly, but growing mellow, and kinder, and gentler with the years. He had quite lost the use of one side now, and had to be carried up the stairs he had trod so many years with such dignity, and he was wheeled into

chapel a feeble, broken-down old man, whose working day was spent. But he was still a tutor of Trinity. Herbert was deputy tutor, and did all his work beside his own. His hands were much too full now to think about the lonely, unrewarded future that he had once told himself lay before him. Time had softened the bitterness of his sorrow, and his mind was flowing again in its long-accustomed channels, with all his sympathies quickened and enlarged. There was a great gap already between him and the undergraduates whose ranks he had so lately left. They looked up to him with a reverential awe as if he were a Don, and came to him for advice and counsel as if he had been years their senior.

Mr. Routh had no need to urge upon him, as he always was urging upon him in their solitary walks—at least, Herbert did the walking, and pushed the paralyzed tutor's chair before him through the trim paths of the Fellows' gardens—to be generous and lenient in dealing with the faults and follies of other men. His own experience had already taught him that gentle lesson.

They sometimes encountered Lilian Howell and the old Master in these secluded walks, and the two feeble old scholars would babble away beneath the chestnuts, while the young people dropped behind—and talked about the weather.

They did not always talk about the weather; but they never referred to those sad days clouded by suspicion—to the dreadful tragedy that had been enacted in Neville's Court. The old, pleasant, unreserved intercourse of those happy days after Herbert's accident on the river, when the gracious mistress presided over the Lodge, was renewed as if there had been no break.

Lilian Howell had offered herself, and been accepted by the Church Missionary Society, for work in the Zenana Mission in the East, and she was completing a six months' probation of nursing at Addenbroke's Hospital before being sent to the front of the battle.

Herbert had some thoughts of going too, and he seriously talked the matter over with Mr. Routh, who smilingly dissuaded him. The college couldn't spare him.

Two events happened on the memorable blue day in June when he took his M.A. degree. Mr. Routh resigned his office of college tutor, and the Seniority unanimously invited Herbert to fill his place, and elected him a Senior Fellow.

When he came back from the Senate-house, blushing above his new silk M.A. hood, the old tutor gave him some friendly advice.

'The next change will be scarlet,' he said, smiling and stroking the white gleaming silk folds with his feeble hand; 'but I shall not be here to see it. I want you to promise me, Flowers, now that you will sit in my place, to deal with the great trust that has been committed to you more kindly and wisely than I have. Looking back upon my life here, I am constrained to acknowledge that I have been hard and unsympathetic, and extreme to mark what has been done amiss. I have never sought to win the con-

fidence of the men, nor encouraged them to come to me in their troubles. When the Black Book is opened hereafter, with the dreary records of the useful careers that have been blighted through undue severity, may the Recording Angel deal more leniently with me than I have dealt with the young thoughtless lives that have been committed to me!

'Remember always, Flowers, while upholding the dignity of the college, to spoil no man's life by harshness or undue severity. Remember, however just the sentence, that they have their lives to live, and give them, for my sake, another chance. In order that this warning and injunction may be ever fresh in your mind, I have, with the Master's permission, had a dove-cote set up in the Fellows' gardens, to remind you, as you see the pigeons wheeling above, of the vain, foolish flights of youth when first set free from restraint.'

Herbert put on his cap after Hall, and crossed the court to see the dove-cote in the Fellows' gardens instead of going back to his rooms. As he came out of Hall the postman put a letter in his hands. It was from Jayne, and he read it as he went through the avenue, with the sunlight falling down through the branches on his path. Jayne had great news to tell.

'Dear old Brown,' he wrote, 'is doing wonders. He quite shames us with his energy and enthusiasm. He has beaten us all in the race. The new bishopric question is settled, and Brown is to be the first Bishop. Think of him, dear old fellow, after all his failures and disasters! And—how am I to tell you?—he is coming home to marry Mary Barclay!'

There was such a singing in Herbert's ears, and such a mist before his eyes when he stood before the new dove-cote, that he did not notice that another person was viewing with mild astonishment this unwonted sight in the Fellows' gardens.

The dove-cote was already tenanted, and the pigeons were cooing and trotting in and out of their new home, on housekeeping cares intent; and in the old nests in the tall elm-trees above, the rooks were babbling and chiding; and all the glowing colours of the bright June day were glowing brighter, and warmer, and mellow as the sun went down.

Lilian Howell was the first to speak, as she stood in the sunshine, in her sweet nurse's garb, with the pigeons cooing overhead.

'Oh, Mr. Flowers, whose is this?' she asked. 'What does it mean?'

Then Herbert told her the story of his last success, and how this had been set up as a warning and a guide to him. She congratulated him in broken words, for there were tears already in her foolish eyes.

And then he told her—where he got his courage from he never knew—that this was the proud and happy moment that he had looked forward to since the first day he had been in Trinity. This

little hand, that he had somehow, without his knowing, already pinioned, was the prize he had worked for every day and hour since he had been admitted a scholar of Trinity. This was the goal he had laboured for ; this was the success he sought—this the summit, the end of all his ambitions !

The old, old story has been told so many times ; and the same, very same, words have been said over and over again ; and there is nothing new under the sun !

The sun was quite tired of hearing it, and it slipped discreetly off the grass, and climbed the gray wall of the college chapel, and crept along the roof, and up into the sky, while Herbert was still talking. And as they lingered still, side by side, in the old Fellows' gardens, with the colours deepening and the shadows lengthening, all the cooing and the chiding were borne to them across the dewy fields, with all their sweet, solemn lessons of hope and warning.

THE END.

